



*George Washington Flowers
Memorial Collection*

DUKE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

ESTABLISHED BY THE
FAMILY OF
COLONEL FLOWERS



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

FURTHER MISHAPS

TO

Si Klegg and Shorty.

The Second Year of Their Service.

ILLUSTRATED.

PUBLISHED BY
THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

McElroy 15
FURTHER HAPS AND MISHAPS

TO

SI KLEGG AND SHORTY.

THE SECOND YEAR OF THEIR SERVICE.

ILLUSTRATED.

WASHINGTON, D. C.:
THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE,
1898



SI KLEGG AND SHORTY.

CHAPTER L

THE MUD AND MIRE OF DUTY'S PATH.

"Shorty," said Si Klegg, the morning after Christmas, 1862, as the 200th Ind. sullenly plunked along through the mud and rain, over the roads leading southward from Nashville, "they say that this is to be a sure-enough battle and end the war."

"Your granny's night-cap they do," answered Shorty crossly, as he turned his cap around backward to stop the icy current from chasing down his backbone. "How many thousand times 's that bin stuffed into your ears? This is the forty-thousandth mile we've marched to find that battle that was goin' to end the war. And I'll bet we'll march 40,000 more. This war ain't goin' to end till we've scuffed the top off all the roads in Kentucky and Tennessee, and wore out God's patience and all the sole-leather in the North. I believe it's the shoemakers that's runnin' this war in the interest o' their business."

The cold, soaking rain had reduced the most of the 200th Ind. to a mood when they would have disputed the Ten Commandments and quarreled with their mothers.

"There's no use bein' crosser'n a saw-buck if you are wet, Shorty," said Si, walking to the side of the road and scraping off his generous-sized brogans several pounds of stiff, red mud. "They say this new General with a Dutch name is a fighter from Wayback, an' he always licks the rebels right out of their boots. I'm sure, I hope it's so. I like huntin' ez well ez anybody, an' I'll walk

ez rur ez the next man to find something to shoot. But I think walkin' over two States, backward and forward, is altogether too much huntin' for so little shootin'. Don't you?"

"Don't worry," snapped Shorty. "You'll git all the shootin' you want before your three years are up. It'll keep."

"But why keep it so long?" persisted Si. "If it can be done up in three months, an' we kin git back home, why dribble it out over three years? That ain't the way we do work back home on the Wabash."

"Confound back home on the Wabash," roared Shorty. I don't hear nothin' else, day an' night, but 'back home on the Wabash.' I've bin on the Wabash, an' I don't want to never see the measly, muddy, agery ditch agin'. Why, they have the ager so bad out there that it shakes the buttons off a man's clothes, the teeth out of his head, the horns off the cows. An' as for milk-sickness——

"Shorty!" thundered Si, "stop right there. If you wasn't my pardner I'd thrash you this minute. I kin join you in jawin' about the officers an' the Government. A great deal of your slack that I can't agree with I kin put up with, but you mustn't say nothin' against my home in the Wabash Valley. That I won't stand from no man. For fear that I may lose my temper I'm goin' away from you till you're in better humor."

With that Si strode on ahead, feeling as cross and uncomfortable internally as he was ill-at-ease externally. He hated above all things to quarrel with Shorty, but the Wabash Valley, that gardenspot of earth, that place where lived his parents, and sister, and Annabel—but the subject was too sore to think about.

Presently an Aid came galloping along the middle of the road, calling upon the men to make way for him.

His horse's hoofs threw the mud in every direction, and Si caught a heavy spatter directly in his face.

"Confound them snips of Aids," said he angrily, as he wiped the mud off. "Put on more airs than if they was old Gen. Scott himself. Always pretend to be in such a powerful hurry. Everybody must hustle out of their way. I think that fool jest did that on purpose."



THE AID SPATTERS MUD ON SI

The rain kept pouring down with tormenting persistence. Wherever Si looked were drenched, depressed looking men; melancholy, steaming horses; sodden, gloomy fields; yellow, rushing streams, and boundless mud that thousands of passing feet were churning into the consistency of building-mortar.

Si had seen many rainy days since he had been in the army, but this was the first real Winter rain he had been out in.

Jabe Belcher, the most disagreeable man in Co. Q, was just ahead of him. He stepped into a mudpuddle, slipped, threw the mud and water over Si, and his gun, which he flung in the effort to save himself, struck Si on the shoulder.

"Clumsy lunkhead!" roared Si, as ill-tempered now as anybody. "Couldn't you see that puddle and keep out of it? You'd walk right into the Cumberland River if it was in front of you. Never saw such a bat-eyed looney in my life."

"If the Captain wasn't lookin'," retorted Belcher, "I'd shut up both them dead-mackerel eyes o' your'n, you backwoods yearlin'. I'll settle with you after we git into camp. Your stripes won't save you."

"Never mind about my stripes, old Stringhalt. I kin take them off long enough to wallop you."

Si was in such a frame of mind that his usual open-eyedness was gone. The company was wading across a creek, and Si plunged in without a thought. He stepped on a smooth stone, his feet went from under him, and he sat down hard and waist-deep in much the coldest water that he ever remembered.

"O, Greenland's icy mountains," was all that he could think to say.

The other boys yelled:

"Come on to camp, Si. That's no place to sit down."

"Feet hurt, Si, and goin' to rest a little?"

"This your day for taking a bath, Si?"

"Thinks this is a political meetin', and he's to take the chair."

"Place—Rest!"

"When I sit down, I prefer a log or a rail; but some men's different."

"See a big bass there, Si, an' try to ketch him by settin' down on him?"

"Git up, Si; git up, an' give your seat to some lady."

Si was too angry to notice their jibes. He felt around in the icy water for his gun, and clambered out on the bank. He first poured the water out of his gun-barrel and wiped the mud off. His next thought was the three days' rations he had drawn that morning. He opened his haversack, and poured out the water it had caught.



WAIST-DEEP IN COLD WATER.

With it went his sugar, coffee and salt. His hardtack were a pasty mess; his meat covered with sand and dirt. He turned the haversack inside out, and swashed it out in the stream.

Back came Capt. McGillicuddy, with water streaming from the down-turned rim of his hat, and his humor bad. He was ignorant of Si's mishap.

"Corporal Klegg, what are you doing back here? Why aren't you in your place? I've been looking all around for you. The company wagon's stalled back somewhere. That spavin-brained teamster's at his old tricks. I want you to take five men off the rear of the company, go back and find that wagon, and bring it up. Be smart about it."

"Captain," remonstrated Si, "I'm wetter'n a drowned rat. I"—

"Well, who in thunder ain't?" exploded the Captain. "Do I look as dry as a basket of chips? Am I walking around in a Panama and linen clothes? Did you expect to keep from getting your feet wet when you came into the army? I want none of your belly-aching or sore-toeing. You take five men and bring up that wagon in a hurry. Do you hear me?"

And the Captain splashed off through the red mud to make somebody else still more miserable.

Si picked up his wet gun from the rain-soaked sod, put it under his streaming overcoat, ordered the five drenched, dripping, dejected boys near him to follow, and plunged back into the creek, which had by this time risen above his knees. He was past the stage of anger now. He simply wished that he was dead and out of the whole business. A nice, dry grave on a sunny hillock in Posey County, with a good roof over it to keep out the rain, would be a welcome retreat.

In gloomy silence he and his squad plodded back through the eternal mud and the steady downpour, through the mirey fields, through the swirling yellow floods in the brooks and branches, in search of the lagging company wagon.

Two or three miles back they came upon it, stuck fast in a deep mud-hole. The enraged teamster was pounding the mules over the head with the butt of his black-snake whip, not in the expectation of getting any further

effort out of them—he knew better than that—but as a relief to his overcharged heart.

“Stop beatin’ them mules over the head,” shouted Si, as they came up. Not that he cared a fig about the mules, but that he wanted to “jump” somebody.



“STOP BEATIN’ THEM MULES.”

“Go to brimstone blazes, you freckle-faced Posey County refugee,” responded Groundhog, the teamster, in the same fraternal spirit. “I’m drivin’ this here team.” He gave the nigh-swing mule a “welt” that would have knocked down anything else than a swing mule.

“If you don’t stop beatin’ them mules, by thunder, I’ll make you.”

“Make’s a good word,” responded Groundhog, giving the off-swing mule a wicked “biff.” “I never see anything come out of Posey County that could make me do what I didn’t want to.”

Si struck at him awkwardly. He was so hampered by his weight of soggy clothes that there was little force or

direction to his blow. The soaked teamster returned the blow with equal clumsiness.

The other boys came up and pulled them apart.

"We ain't no time for sich blamed nonsense," they growled. "We've got to git this here wagon up to the company, an' we'll have the devil's own time doin' it. Quit skylarkin' an' git to work."

They looked around for something with which to make pries. Every rail and stick within a quarter of a mile of the road was gone. They had been used up the previous Summer, when both armies had passed over the road.

There was nothing to do but plod off through mud and rain to the top of a hill in the distance, where there was a fence still standing. A half an hour later each of the six came back with a heavy rail on his shoulder. They pried the wagon out and got it started, only to sink again in another quagmire a few hundred yards further on.

Si and the boys went back to get their rails, but found that they had been carried off by another squad that had a wagon in trouble. There was nothing to do but to make another toilsome journey to the fence for more rails.

After helping the wagon out they concluded it would be wiser to carry their rails along with them a little ways to see if they would be needed again.

They were—many times that afternoon. As darkness came on Si, who had the crowning virtue of hopefulness when he fully recognized the unutterable badness of things, tried to cheer the other boys up with assertions that they would soon get into camp, where they would find bright, warm fires with which to dry their clothes, and plenty of hot coffee to thaw them out inside.

The quick-coming darkness added enormously to the misery of their work. For hours they struggled along the bottomless road, in the midst of a ruck of played-out

mules and unutterably tired, disgusted men, laboring as they were to get wagons ahead.

Finally they came up to their brigade, which had turned off the road and gone into line-of-battle in an old cotton-field, where the mud was deeper, if possible, than in the road.

"Where's the 200th Ind.?" called out Si.

"Here, Si," Shorty's voice answered.

"Where's the fires, Shorty?" asked Si, with sinking heart.

"Ain't allowed none," answered his partner gloomily. "There's a rebel battery on that hill there, and they shoot every time a match is lighted. What've you got there, a rail? By George, that's lucky! We'll have something to keep us out of the mud."

They laid the rail down and sat upon it.

"Shorty," said Si, as he tried to arrange his aching bones to some comfort on the rail, "I got mad at you for cussin' the Wabash this mornin'. I ain't a fluid talker such as you are, an' I can't find words to say what I think. But I just wisht you would begin right here and cuss everybody from Abe Lincoln down to Corporal Si Klegg, and everything from the Wabash in Injianny down to the Cumberland in Tennessee. I'd like to listen to you."

CHAPTER II

THE SECOND DAY'S MARCH TO STONE RIVER.

Si Klegg was generous with his rail, as he was with all things among his comrades. He selected the softest part, in the center, for himself and Shorty, and then invited the other boys to share its hospitalities. They crowded up close to him and Shorty on either side, and there seemed to come a little warmth and dryness from the close contact of their bodies.

Si was so mortally tired that it seemed a great relief just to sit still and rest, though the rain continued to pour down.

Shorty fished some hardtack and fried pork out of his haversack, and also gave him a handful of ground coffee. Si munched the crackers and meat, with an occasional nip at the coffee. His spirits began to rise just a trifle. He was too healthy in body and mind to be totally down-cast for long.

"'Tis n't much of a supper," he said to himself, "but it beats nothin' at all miles and miles. Besides, I was mighty lucky in gettin' the biggest rail. Some that the other boys has are no good at all. They'll let 'em right down in the mud. And most o' the boys has no rails at all. I'm awfully sorry for 'em."

Then he began to wonder if they were not over-cautious about the nearness of the enemy. He had been in the army just long enough to have a contempt for the stories that were all always current with a certain class about the proximity and strength of the enemy. Shorty was not of that kind; but, then, Shorty was as liable to be imposed upon as anybody.

"How do you know there's a rebel battery on the hill out there?" he finally asked Shorty.

"They belted into the Oshkosh Terrors, out there to our right, killed a mule, scared two teamsters to death, and knocked over three or four kettles of coffee. It was awful unlucky about the coffee," answered Shorty.

"How long ago was that?"

"O, several hours ago. Just after we turned into the field, and long before you come up."

"Mebbe they've gone off now. Mebbe, if they're there yet, their ammynition's so soaked they can't shoot. What do you say to startin' a little fire? It'd be an immense comfort. Unless we can dry out a little we'll be soaked into such mush before morning that we can't keep our shape, and they'll have to ladle us up with dippers."

"It's strictly against orders."

"You mean it was against orders several hours ago. I can't see nothin' on that hill over there. I've been watchin' for half-an-hour. There's nothin' movin'. Mebbe the orders has been changed, an' you haint heard about it," persisted Si. "Mebbe the Orderly that was bringing 'em 's got stuck in the mud. Mebbe the rain's soaked 'em so's they can't be read. If anybody's got any dry matches I'm goin' to chance it."

Word was passed along the rail, and at length one of the boys was found to have some matches in a tin box which was proof against the rain.

Si got out his knife and whittled down a corner of the rail until he came to the dry part, and got off some snavings. Splinters were contributed by the others, and after several failures a small flame was started.

"Here, what in the world are you men doing there?" came in the stentorian tones of the Colonel, whom startled Si to discover was sitting a short distance behind him. "Put that light out this instant."

Even before the command could be obeyed, four great flashes burned out like lightning in the murky darkness on the hill-top. Four cannon roared, and four shells screeched toward Si and his companions, who instinctively toppled over backward into the mud. One of the shells struck in the mud a few yards in front, burst with a deafening report, and sent over them a deluge of very wet Tennessee real estate.

"The battery's out there yit, Si," said Shorty, as they gathered themselves up and carefully stamped out every spark of the fire.

"It's 'ten'gin' strictly to business," remarked Wes Williams.

"It's ammynition don't seem to be a mite wet," added Jim Hutchinson.

"There, you see, now," said the Colonel sternly. "I'll tie up by the thumbs the next man that dares scratch a match."

"You jest kin if I do," muttered Si, scraping off some of the superabundant mud, and resuming his seat on the rail. "This dog's cured of suckin' eggs."

He set the butt of his gun down in front of him, clasped his hands around the barrel, leaned his head on them, and went to sleep.

He was so tired that he could have slept anywhere and in any position. He was dimly conscious during the night that the rain ceased and that it turned bitter cold. He was not going to wake up for trifles like that, though. When Si went to sleep he devoted himself entirely to that and nothing else. It was one thing that he never allowed any interference with.

But with the first gray streaks of dawn in the east some uneasy, meddlesome spirit in the 200th Ind. happened to be awake, and he awakened the Adjutant, who cuffed and shook the headquarters drummer until he

awakened and beat the reveille. This aroused the weary Orderly-Sergeants, who started upon the task of getting up the bone-wracked, aching-muscled men. In 10 minutes there was enough discontent and bitter grumbling in the 200th Ind. to have furnished forth a new political party.



FROZEN IN THE MUD.

The awakening process finally reached those of Co. Q who had roosted on Si's rail all night.

Si vigorously insisted on being let alone; that he hadn't been asleep five minutes, and that, anyhow, it was not his turn to go on guard. But the Orderly-Sergeant of Co. Q was a persistent fellow, and would not be denied.

When Si finally tried to rise he found that, in addition to the protests of his stiff legs, he was pinned firmly

down. Feeling around to ascertain the cause, he discovered that the tail of his overcoat and his shoes had become deeply imbedded in the mud, and frozen solidly there. Shorty was in the same fix.

"Got to shuck yourself out o' your overcoat, and leave them gunboats anchored where they are," remarked Shorty, doing as he said, and falling in for roll-call in his stocking feet.

After roll-call Si got a hatchet from one of the boys and chopped his and Shorty's shoes out. The overcoats were left for subsequent effort, for the first thing was to get some wood and water and cook breakfast.

The morning was bitter cold and the sky overcast, but Si felt that this was a thousand times better than the cheerless rain, which seemed to soak his very life out of him.

He pounded most of the frozen mud off his shoes, picked up the camp-kettle, and started off for wood and water, broke the ice on the creek, took a good wash, and presently came back with a load of dry pine and a kettle full of water.

"My joints feel like I think our old wagon does after it's gone about a year without greasing," he remarked to Shorty, who had a good fire going; "but I think that after I get about a quart o' hot coffee inside of me, with a few pounds o' pork and crackers, I'll be nearly as good as new again. My, how good that grub does smell! An' did you ever see such a nice fire?"

He chopped his and Shorty's overcoats out while Shorty was cooking breakfast, and when at last he sat down on one end of his rail and ate enough toasted hard bread and crisp fried side-meat to feed a small family for a week, washing it down with something near a quart of black coffee sweetened with coarse brown sugar, life began to again have some charms for him.

"You're sure that dumb'd battery's gone that shot at us last night, are you, Shorty?" he said, as he drained his cup, fastened it again to the strap of his haversack, and studied the top of the hill with a critical eye.

"They say it is," said Shorty, between bites. "While you was down at the crick a man come cover from the camp o' the Oshkosh Terrors, and said two o' their companies'd been onto the hill, and the rebels had gone."

"I wish them Oshkosh fellers'd mind their own business," said Si, irritably, as he picked up his gun and began rubbing the mud and rust off. "They're entirely too fresh for a new regiment. That battery was none of theirs. It was ours, right in our front, an' if they'd let it alone till after breakfast we'd gone up and taken it. It was just the right size for the 200th Ind., an' we wanted a chance at it. But now they've had to stick in and run it off."

"Don't worry," said Shorty, fishing out another cracker. "It hasn't gone too far. 'Taint lost. You'll have a chance at it some other time. Mebbe to-day yet."

The army began to move out very promptly, and soon the 200th Ind. was called to take its place in the long column that crawled over the hills and across the valleys toward Murfreesboro, like some gigantic blue serpent moving toward his prey.

Miles ahead of the 200th Ind.'s place in the column the rebels were offering annoying disputation of farther progress. Lines as brown as the dried leaves on the oak trees would form on the hilltops, batteries would gallop into position, and there would be sharp bangs by the cannon and a sputter of musketry-fire.

Then the long, blue serpent would wriggle out of the road into the fields, as if coiling to strike. Union batteries would rush on to hilltops and fire across the valleys at the rebel cannon, and a sputter of musketry would

answer that from the leaf-brown ranks on the hilltops, which would dissolve and march back to the next hill-



"PEERING EARNESTLY INTO THE BRUSH."

top, where the thing would be gone over again. The 200th Ind. would occasionally see one of these performances as it marched over and down one of the hills.

As the afternoon was wearing away the 200th Ind. kept nearing the front where this was going on. Finally, when the dull day was shading into dusk, and the brigade ahead of it was forming in the field at the foot of a hill to open a bickering fire against the dun line at the top, the 200th Ind. was taken off the road and marched away over to the left, where it was put into line in front of a dense grove of cedars.

"Capt. McGillicuddy," commanded the Colonel to the Captain of Co. Q, "advance your company as skirmishers to the edge of the cedars, and send a Corporal and five men into the thicket to see if there is anything there."

"Corporal Klegg," said the Captain, "take five men off the left of the company and go in and see what's in there."

Si was instantly fired with the importance of the duty assigned him. He sent two of his men to the left, two to the right, while he and Shorty, a little distance apart, struck for the heart of the thicket. They made their way with difficulty through the dense chaparral for some minutes, and then stopped, as they heard voices and the crashing of branches in front.

Si's heart thumped against his ribs. He looked over to his left, and saw Shorty standing there peering earnestly into the brush, with his gun cocked and ready to fire. He ran over to him and whispered:

"What do you see, Shorty?"

"Nothin' yit, but I expect to every minute," replied Shorty, without turning his intent eyes. Si's gun was already cocked, and he bent his head forward eagerly, to get a better view. But he could see nothing, except that the tops of the bushes were shaking.

"Shall we skip back an' report?" Si

"I ain't goin' till I see something," said Shorty, stoutly.

"Nor me," echoed Si, rather ashamed that he had suggested it.

"Steady, there; steady, on the right! Come forward with that left company," called out a stern voice in front.



"SURRENDER, YOU CONARNED REBELS!"

"Must be a full regiment in there," whispered Si, craning his neck still farther. The tramping and crashing increased

"Steady, men, I tell you! Steady! Dress on the center, commanded the unseen Colonel. "Forward! Forward!"

In spite of his perturbation, Si noticed that the sounds did not seem to be coming any nearer.

"We must get a squint at 'em," he said, desperately, to Shorty. "Let's git down an' crawl forward. There must be an openin' somewhere."

They got down on their hands and knees, so as to avoid as many as possible of the thickly-interlaced branches. Soon they came to a rift which led to an opening of some rods in circumference. Raising their heads cautiously above a moss-covered log, they saw in the opening a stalwart Sergeant with five or six men. The Sergeant was standing there with his eyes fixed on the tops of the trees, apparently thinking of the next series of commands he was to give, while the men were busy breaking limbs off the cedars.

Si and Shorty immediately grasped the situation.

"Forward, Co. Q!" yelled Si at the top of his lungs. "Surrender, you consarned rebels, or we'll blow your heads off," he added, as he and Shorty jumped forward into the opening and leveled their guns on the squad.

The Sergeant stopped in the midst of a thundering command and started to raise his gun, but he saw Si's muzzle too near his head, and dropped it. The rest held up their hands.

"What'n thunder was you fellers makin' all that racket fur?" Si asked the Sergeant as he was marching him back to the skirmish-line.

"Ouah Cunnel," explained the Sergeant, "wuz afeared you'ns'd try to flank us through the thicket, and sent me down to make a rumpus and hold you back while he fit you in front. But whar's your company?"

"We'll come to it soon," said Si.

CHAPTER III.

STILL MARCHING ON TO STONE RIVER.

Si called out to the other boys by name to come up and join him.

The rebel Sergeant mentally tallied off each name as it was called. A flush of shame and anger mounted to his face as Si concluded.

"Gol darn hit," he said, "yo'uns hain't got ez many ez we'uns; they hain't nigh ez good men ez we'uns, an' they'uns ain't heah. We'uns air Tennesseans. an' yo'uns hain't."

"We've got enough, an' they're good enough," said Si sententiously. "Injianny turns out better men than Tennessee ever dreamed o' doing."

"I don't believe hit a mite," said the Sergeant, stooping down and picking up a piece of cedar, which made a formidable club. "We'uns is not a-gwine back with yo'uns nary a step. By rights, we'uns orter take yo'uns back with we'uns. But I'm willin' to call hit off, and let yo'uns go ef yo'uns 'll let we'uns go. Is hit a bargain?"

"Not by 40 rows o' apple trees it ain't," said Si, stepping back a little to get better range, and fixing his bayonet. "I've set my heart on takin' you back to Co. Q, an' back to Co. Q you'll go, if Si Klegg knows himself."

"And you'll go in a hurry, too," said Shorty. "It's gettin' late, and I'm always afraid to be out after dark. Mosey, now!"

The other rebels were picking up clubs similar to the Sergeant's and casting their eyes on him for the signal to attack.

"See here," said Si desperately, cocking his gun. "Don't waste no more time in words. This hain't a debatin' society. You're goin' back to Co. Q or going



SI REPORTS TO THE COLONEL.

somewhere else thunderin' quick. Sergeant, if you make a move agin me I'll surely blow your head offen you, an' jab my bayonet through the next man. My partner, Shorty, is a worse man than I am, an' I can't tell how many of you he'll kill. He's awful quick-

tempered, too, towards evening, an' liable to begin shooting any minute without warnin'. It'll save several lives if you start right off on the jump, straight toward the rear, an' keep it up, without looking to the right or left, until you reach Co. Q. You'll find the trail we made comin' in. Take it this minute."

The rebel Sergeant's eyes looked directly into the dark muzzle of Si's gun. They glanced along the barrel, and met one eye looking directly through the sights, while the other was closed, in the act of taking deliberate aim. He decided with great promptness that there were many reasons why he should prefer to be a live rebel in a Yankee prison, rather than a badly-disfigured dead one in a lonely cedar thicket. He dropped his club, turned around, and made his way along the path over which Si had come. The rest followed, with Si and Shorty a few paces in the rear.

Palpitating with pride, Si marched his prisoners up to the company, who gave him three cheers. The Captain ordered him to report with his prisoners to the Colonel.

The Colonel praised him with words that made his blood tingle.

The skirmishing off to the right had now ceased. The rebels had fallen back to the next hill-top, and the 200th Ind. was ordered to go into camp where it stood.

It was a fine place for a camp. The mud of the day before was frozen into stony hardness. The wagons had no difficulty in coming up. There was wood and water in abundance, and it seemed that the command "Break ranks—March!" had hardly been uttered when great, bright, comfort-giving fires of fragrant cedar rails flashed up all along the line.

Si and Shorty found several cedar stumps and logs, which they rolled together, and made a splendid fire. They cooked themselves an ample supper of fried pork,

toasted hardtack, and strong, fragrant coffee, which they devoured with an appetite and a keen enjoyment only possible to healthy young men who have had a day of active manuvering and marching in the crisp, chill air of December.



SI AND HIS PARD PREPARING SUPPER.

Then they gathered a lot of cedar branches, and made a thick mattress of them near the fire, upon which to spread their blankets for the night.

This was a new suggestion by Shorty, and an amazing success.

"I declare, Shorty," said Si, as he lay down on the bed to try it, "I often wonder where you get all your ideas.

For a man who wasn't raised on the Wabash you know an awful sight. Mebbe, if you'd actually been born in Posey County you'd a-knowed enough to be a Jigadier-Brindle. Then I'd a lost you for a pard. This's a great invention. Why, it's softer and comfortabler than one of mother's feather beds. When I get out of the army, I'm going to sleep on nothin' but cedar boughs."

"There, you're at it again—the Wabash forever," returned Shorty, good-humoredly. "They raise the finest corn and cattle in the world on the Wabash, I'll admit, and some fairly good soldiers. But where'll you get any cedars there to make beds with? You'll have to go back to sleepin' on wheat straw and corn husks, with chicken-feather pillers. But after the way you stood up to that rebel Sergeant to-day I'll never say another word about ager and milk-sick on the Wabash, and I'll lick any other feller that does. There wasn't a speck of ager in your gizzard when you ordered him forward, or you'd blow his Southern Confederacy head off."

"There was more ager there than you thought, Shorty," Si admitted softly. "I was awfully scared, for there was six to us two, and if that feller 'd had the right kind of sand he'd a-jumped me at once, before I could get my gun up. The moment he began to palaver I knowed I had him. But I'd 'a' died in my tracks before I'd let him go, and I knowed you would, too. You're the best pard a feller ever had."

And he reached over and took Shorty's rough hand and squeezed it affectionately.

"I can bet on you every time, even when I don't think it's quite safe to bet on myself. And, Shorty," he continued, with his eyes kindling, "it was worth all that we've gone through since we've been in the army, even all that time in the rain, to have the Colonel speak as he did to us before all the rest of the boys. I'd be willing to

enlist for three years more if father and mother and sisters, and—and—Annabel could have heard him. I tell you, war has some glorious things in it, after all."

He sat there on his bed before the fire, with his feet curled up under him in the comfortable way that it takes months of field service to acquire, and gazed steadily into the bank of glowing coals. They suffused his face and body with their generous warmth, and helped lift his soul toward the skies. He was much happier than he had ever been before in his life. The trials of the day before were hardly more than a far-away dream. The fears and anxieties of the coming battle were forgotten. The ruddy embers became a radiant vista, which Pride and Hope and Joy filled with all that he wanted to see. He saw there the dear old home on the Wabash, his father seated by the evening lamp reading the paper, while his mother knit on the other side of the table. His sisters were busy with some feminine trifles, and Annabel had come in to learn the news. They would hear what he had done, and of the Colonel's words of praise before the regiment, and his father's heart would glow with pride and his mother's eyes suffuse with tears. And Annabel—but it passed words, passed thought, almost, what she would say and think.

Just then tattoo rang out clear and musical on the chill night air. The rattling military "good night" had ^{never} before had any special charms for Si. But now he thought it an unusually sweet composition.

"I declare," he said to Shorty, "that sheepskin band of our'n is improving. They're getting to play real well. But I ought to write a few lines home before taps. Got any paper, Shorty?"

"Much paper you'll find in this regiment after that rain," said Shorty contemptuously, as he knocked the

ashes out of his pipe, and started to fall in for roll-call. "Every mite of paper anybody had was soaked to spit-wads. But mebbe the Orderly might have a sheet."

After roll-call Si went to the Orderly-Sergeant. Noth-



AFTER THE MULES STAMPEDED.

ing in reason could then be refused Si, and the Orderly tore a couple of leaves out of the back of his treasured diary, which had escaped the rain, and handed them to

him. Si fished his stub of a pencil out of his blouse-pocket, laid the paper on the back of a tin-plate, and began:

"Somewhere in Tennessee,
December the 27th, 1862.

"Dere Annabel: We're movin' on Murphysboro, where we expect a big fite. There's bin fitin' goin' on ever since we left Nashville, but the 200th Ind. hain't had no hand in it so far, except this afternoon me and Shorty"

He stopped, stuck his pencil in his mouth, and began to study just what words he should use to describe the occurrence. He wanted to tell her all that was bubbling in his heart, and yet he was afraid she would think him an intolerable boaster, if he told it in just the words that came to him. He was more afraid of that little country girl's disapproval than of all the rebels in Murfreesboro.

There were yells, the rattling of chains, and the sound of galloping hoofs coming towards him.

"Hi, there; stop them condemned mules!" shouted the voice of a teamster.

Si jumped to his feet, for the mules were charging directly for his fire, and were almost upon him. He dropped paper, pan and pencil, and jumped to one side, just in time to avoid a rush which scattered his fire, his carefully-prepared bed, and all his belongings under 24 flying, hard-pounding hoofs.

"Blast mules, anyhow," said the driver, coming up with his whip in his hand. "I didn't hev nothin' for them to eat but a cottonwood pole that I cut down in the bottom. But they must have smelt fodder over there somewhere, and they broke for it like the devil beatin' tanbark. Hope you weren't hurt, pard."

Si and Shorty fixed up their fire again, rearranged their

scattered cedar boughs, and did the best they could with their torn blankets

Si found that a mule's hoof had landed squarely on his tin plate, mashed all future usefulness out of it, and stamped his letter to Annabel into unrecognizability

He threw the rent fragments into the fire, sighed deeply, and crawled under the blankets with Shorty, just as three sounding taps on the base-drum commanded silence and lights out in the camp.

CHAPTER IV.

A BEAM OF THE SUNSHINE OF LIFE.

There come times in every man's life when he feels himself part of the sunshine that illumines and warms the earth—

The lover, after he has won his best girl's consent.

The candidate, after he has been elected by a big majority.

The valedictorian, after his address has been received by bursts of ringing applause.

The clerk, after he has been admitted into partnership.

The next morning the camp of the 200th Ind. seemed to Si Klegg one of the most delightful places on earth.

The sun shone brightly and cheerily through the crisp December air. The fires of cedar rails sent up a pungent, grateful fragrance. Hardtack, pork, and coffee tasted much better than he had ever known them.

Everybody noticed him and spoke pleasantly to him. The other boys of Co. Q called out cheerily to him from their fires. Those from the other companies would stroll over to take a look at him and Shorty, and his comrades would point them out proudly as fair specimens of Co. Q, and what it was capable of doing when called upon in an emergency.

The Captain spoke very cordially to him and Shorty, the busy Adjutant stopped and greeted them smilingly, and even the grave Colonel singled them out for a pleasant "Good morning" and an inquiry as to whether they had everything they wanted. It did not seem to Si Klegg

there was anything more on earth just then for which he could ask.

The 200th Ind. having been at the head of the column when it halted, was to take the rear for that day's march, and so remained in camp for a while to let the rest pass on.



THE ADJUTANT SMILED ON SI AND SHORTY.

After getting things ready for the march Si and Shorty took a stroll through the camp to see what was to be seen. They came across their prisoners seated around a fire, under guard.

How different they looked to what they did the evening before, when the two partners encountered them in the

depths of the cedar brake. Then they seemed like fierce giants, capable of terrible things, such as would make the heart quail. Now, powerless for harm, and awed by the presence of multitudes of armed men in blue filling the country in every direction that they looked they appeared very commonplace, ignorant, rough men, long-haired, staring-eyed, and poorly-clad in coarse, butter-nut-dyed homespun, frayed and tattered.

"Father gits better men than them to work on the farm for \$8 a month," Si remarked to Shorty, after a lengthened survey of them.

"Eight dollars a month is Congressman's wages to what they git for fightin' for the Southern Confederacy," answered Shorty. "I don't s'pose any one of 'em ever had eight real dollars in his pocket in his life. They say they're fightin' to keep us from takin' their niggers away from 'em, and yit if niggers wuz sellin' for \$1 a-piece not one of 'em could buy a six-months'-old baby. Let's go up and talk to 'em'."

"I don't know 'bout that," said Si, doubtfully. "Seems to me I wouldn't be particularly anxious to see men who'd taken me prisoner and talked very cross about blowin' my blamed head off."

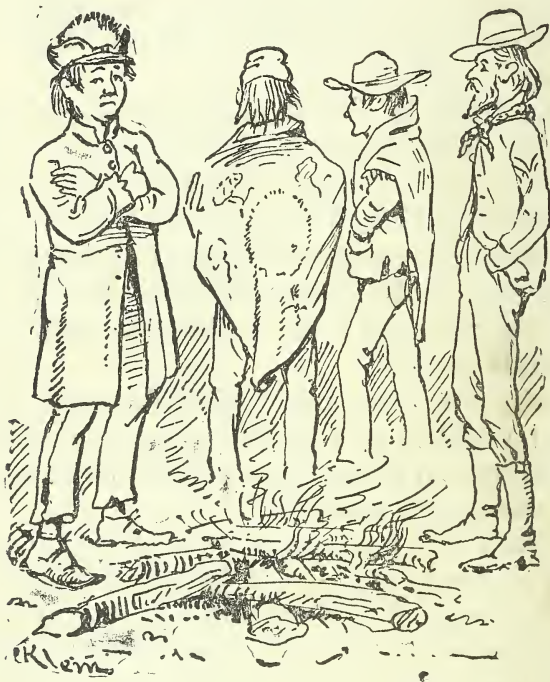
"O, that's all right," answered Shorty confidently. "Words spoken in the heat of debate, and so on. They won't lay them up agin us. If they do, and want any satisfaction, we can give it to 'em. I kin lick any man in that crowd with my fists, and so kin you. We'll jest invite 'em to a little argyment with nature's weepens, withut no interierence by the guard. Come on."

The prisoners returned their greetings rather pleasantly. They were so dazed by the host of strange faces that Si and Shorty seemed, in a measure, like old acquaintances.

"Had plenty to eat, boys?" asked Shorty, familiarly,

seating himself on a log beside them and passing his pipe and tobacco to the Sergeant.

"Plenty, thankee," said the Sergeant, taking the pipe and filling it. "More'n we'uns 've had sence we left home, an' mouty good vittles, too. You Yanks sartinly live well, ef yo'uns don't do nothin' else."



THE PRISONER

"Yes," said Shorty with a glance at his mud-stained garments, "we're bound to live high and dress well, even if we don't lay up a cent."

"You sartinly do have good cloze, too," said the Sergeant, surveying the stout blue uniforms with admiration. "Yo'uns' common soldiers 've better cloze than

our officers. We'uns got hold o' some o' yo'uns' overcoats, and they wear like leather."

"There's leather in 'em," said Shorty unblushingly. "I tell you, old Abe Lincoln's a very smart man. He saw that this war was costin' a heap of money, especially for clothes. He got a bright idee that by soaking the clothes when they were new and green in the tan-vats, jest after the leather wuz taken out, they'd take up the strength o' the leather out o' the juice, and wear always. The idee worked bully, and now old Abe goes every morning to where they're makin' clothes and sees that every stitch is put to soak."

"Nobody but a Yankee'd thought o' that," said the rebel reflectively.

"You bet," assented Shorty. "Jeff Davis'd never think of it if he lived to be as old as Methuselah. But that's only the beginnin' of Abe Lincoln's smartness."

"He's a durned sight smarter man than we'uns thought he wuz when we begun the war," admitted the Sergeant. "But we'uns 'll wollop him yit, in spite of his smartness."

"We kin tell more about that a few months later," returned Shorty. "It's never safe to count the game until the last hand's played. We hain't fairly begun to lead trumps yit. But what are you fellers fighting for, anyhow?"

"We'uns foutin' for our liberty, and t' keep yo'uns from takin' our niggers away."

The reply that came to Shorty's lips was that they seemed to be losing a great deal of liberty rather than gaining it, but he checked this by the fear that it would be construed as an ungentlemanly boast of their capture. He said, instead:

"I never knowed as any of us wanted your niggers—me particularly. I wouldn't take a wagon load of 'em, even if the freight was prepaid. But, let me ask you, Sergeant, how many niggers do you own?"

"I don't own nary one."

"Does your father own any?"

"No, he don't."

"Does your mother, or brothers, uncles, aunts, or cousins own any?" persisted Shorty.

"No, thar aint nary one owned in the hull fambly."

"Seems to me," said Shorty, "you're doin' a great deal of fightin' to keep us from takin' away from you something that we don't want and you haint got. That's the way it looks to a man from north o' the Ohio River. Mebbe there's something in the Tennessee air that makes him see differently. I'll admit that I've changed my mind about a good many things since we crossed the river."

"I've alluz said," spoke another of the prisoners, "that this wuz a rich man's wah and a pore man's fout."

"Well," said Shorty, philosophically, "for folks that like that sort o' fightin', that's the sort o' fightin' they like. I'm different. I don't. When I fight it's for something that I've got an interest in."

While the discussion was going on Si had been studying the appearance of the prisoners. In spite of their being enemies his heart was touched by their comfortless condition. Not one of them had an overcoat or blanket. The Sergeant and a couple of others had over their shoulders pieces of the State House carpet, which had been cut up into lengths and sewed together for blankets. Another had what had once been a gaudy calico counterpane, with the pattern "Rose of Sharon" wrought out in flaming colors. It was now a sadly-bedraggled substitute for a blanket. The others had webs of jeans sewed together

The buttons were gone from their garments in many essential places, and replaced by strings, nails, skewers and thorns. Worst of all, almost every one of them was nearly shoeless. A sudden impulse seized Si.

"Shorty," said he, "these men are going up where the weather is very cold. I wish I was able to give each of them a warm suit of clothes and a blanket. I ain't though. But I tell you what I will do; I'll go down to the Quartermaster and see if he'll issue me a pair of shoes for each of 'em, and charge it to my clothin' account."

"Bully idee," ejaculated Shorty. "I'll go you halves. Mebbe if they git their understandin' into Yankee leather it'll help git some Yankee idees into their understandin'. See?"

And Shorty was so delighted with his little joke that he laughed over it all the way to the Quartermaster's wagoa, and then rehearsed it for that officer's entertainment.

Fortunately, the Quartermaster had a box of shoes that he could get at without much trouble, and he was in sufficiently good humor to grant Si's request.

They added a warm pair of socks to each pair of shoes, and so wrought upon the A. Q. M.'s sympathies that he threw in some damaged overcoats, and other articles, which he said he could report "lost in action."

They came back loaded with stuff, which they dumped down on the ground before the prisoners, with the brief remark:

"Them's all yours. Put 'em on."

The prisoners were overwhelmed by this generosity on the part of their foes and captors.

"I alluz thought," said the Sergeant, "that you Yankees wuz not half so bad ez I believed that yo'uns wuz. Yo'uns is white men, if yo'uns do want to take away our niggers."

"Gosh," said the man who had uttered the opinion that it was a rich man's war and a poor man's fight, "I'd give all my interest in every nigger in Tennessee for that ere one pa'r o' shoes. They're beauties, I tell you. I never had so good a pa'r afore in all my life."

CHAPTER V.

INING UP ON THE BANKS OF STONE RIVER.

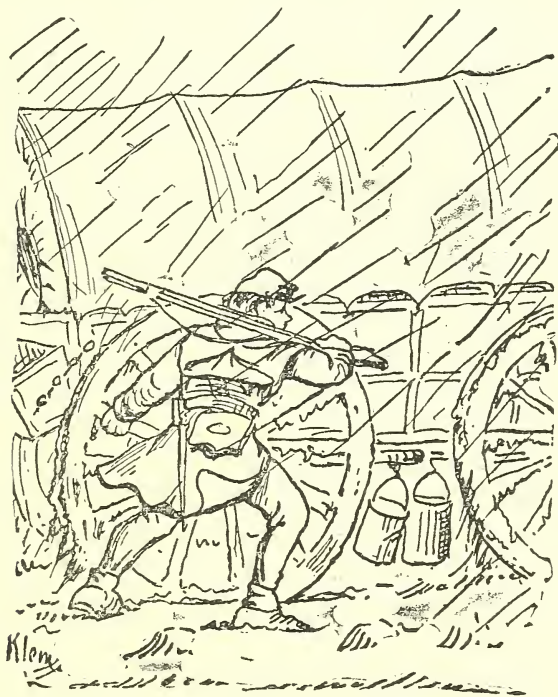
"Rain agin to-day," said Shorty, disgustedly, as, on the morning of Dec. 30, 1862, he crawled out of the shelter which he and Si had constructed by laying a pole in the crotches of two young cedars, and stretching their ponchos and pup-tents over it. "Doggoned if I don't believe Tennessee was left out in the flood, and they've been tryin' to make up for it ever since. I'd rather have the flood at once, and be done with it, for then I'd join the navy instead of paddlin' 'round in this dirty glue that they call mud."

"Never saw such a grumbler, Shorty," said Si cheerily, as he punched the soaked embers together to start a blaze to boil their coffee by. "Last Summer the dust and dry weather didn't suit you. Do you want to do your soldierin' in heaven?"

"Hurry up with your grub, boys," said the Orderly-Sergeant, who came spattering through the muck of leaves and mud into which the camping-ground had been trampled. "The regiment's to move in 15 minutes. The 200th Ind. guards wagon-trains to-day. Yesterday Wheeler's cavalry got in among our wagons and raised thunder—burnt about a mile of 'em."

Shorty grumbled: "That means a tough day's work pryin' wagons out of the mud, and restin' ourselves between times runnin' after a lot o' skippin', cavortin' cavalry that's about as easy to ketch as a half-bushel o' fleas. Anything I hate it's rebel cavalry—all tear-around and yell, and when you git ready to shoot they're on the other side o' the hill."

"Well," said Si, removing a slab of sizzling fat pork from the end of his rammer, laying it on his hardtack, and taking a generous bite, "we musn't allow them to take no wagons away from the 200th Ind., slosh around as they may. We want all that grub ourselves."



EARNING THIRTEEN DOLLARS A MONTH.

"Well, hump yourselves," said the Orderly-Sergeant, as he spattered on; "fall in promptly when the assembly blows. Got plenty o' cartridges?"

Two or three hours later every man in the 200th Ind., wet to the skin, and with enough mud on him to be assessable as real estate, was in a temper to have "sassed his gentle old grandmother and whipped his best friend.

He believed that if there was anything under heavens meaner than Tennessee weather it was an army mule; the teamsters had even less sense and more contrariness than the mules; the army wagon was a disheartening device of the devil, and Tennessee roads had been especially contrived by Jeff Davis to break the hearts of Union soldiers.

The rain came down with a steady pelt that drove right through to the body. The wagon wheels sank into every mud-hole and made it deeper. Prying out the leading ones seemed only to make it worse for the next. The discouraged mules would settle back in the breechings, and not pull an ounce at the most critical moments. The drivers would become blundering idiots, driveling futile profanity. In spite of all the mud the striving, pushing, pulling, prying, lifting, shouting 200th Ind. gathered up on their hands and clothes, it increased momentarily in the road.

The train had strung out over a mile or more of rocky ledges and abysses of mire. Around each wagon was a squad who felt deeply injured by the certainty that their infernal luck had given them the heaviest wagon, the worst mules, and the most exasperating driver in the whole division.

"I couldn't 've made a doggoneder fool than Groundhog, that teamster," said Shorty, laying down his rail for a minute's rest, "if I'd 'a' had Thompson's colt before my eyes for a pattern. That feiler was born addied, on Friday, in the dark of the moon."

"Them mules," dolefully corroborated Si, scraping an acre, more or less, of red Tennessee soil from his overcoat with a stick, "need to be broke again—with a saw-log. Lucky for old Job that the devil didn't think o' settin' him to drive mules. He'd 'a' bin a-goner in less'n an hour."

"Doggone it, there they come," said Shorty, snatching up his gun.

Si looked in the direction of Shorty's glance. Out of the cedars, a mile or more away, burst a regiment of rebel cavalry, riding straight for the front of the train.

With his tribe's keen apprehension of danger, Groundhog had jumped from his saddle, nervously unhitched his mule, and sprung into the saddle again, ready for instant flight.

"Get off and hook that mule up agin," commanded Si sternly. "Now get on your mule and go to the head of your team, take the leaders by the bridles, and stay there."

"If you aint standing there holding your mules when we come back I'll break your worthless neck."

The bugle sounded "Rally on the right flank," and Si and Shorty joined the others in a lumbering rush over the miry fields toward the right. Their soaked clothes hung about them like lead. They had not a spoonful of breath left when they got to where, half-a-mile away, Co. A had taken a position in the briers behind a rail fence, and had opened a long-ranged fire on the cavalry, which was manuvering as if trying to discover a way to take the company in flank. Another fence ran at right angles away to the right of Co. A's position. The cavalry started for that.

"Capt. McGillicuddy," shouted the Colonel, "take your company back to that fence as quick as you can, run along back of it, and try to keep those fellows on the other side."

Away the panting company rushed for the fence. The field was overgrown with those pests of the Southern plowman, called locally "devil's shoe-strings," which stretch from furrow-ridge to furrow-ridge, and are snares to any careless walker. The excited Indianians were

constantly tripped on these, and fell headlong in the mud. Down Si and Shorty went several times, to the great damage of their tempers. But in spite of all—rain, mud, lack of breath and devil's shoe-strings—the company got to the fence in advance of the cavalry, and opened a scattering fire as each man could get his damp gun to go off. Si and Shorty ran back a little to a hillock, from which they could get long-distance [shots on where the cavalry would probably try to tear down the fence.

"It's all of 600 yards, Si," said Shorty, as he leaned against a young oak, got his breath back in long gulps, and studied the ground. "We kin make it, though, with our Springfields, if they'll give us time to cool down and git our breaths. I declar I want a whole Township of fresh air every second. That last time I fell knocked enough breath out o' me to fill a balloon."

"There, they're sendin' out a squad now to go for the fence," said Si, putting his sight up to 600 yards. "I'll line on that little persimmon tree and shoot as they pass it. I'll take the fellow on the claybank horse, who seems to be an officer. You take the next one on the spotted bay."

"Better shoot at the hoss," said Shorty, fixing his sight. "Bigger mark; and if you git the hoss you git the man."

The squad made a rush for the fence, but as the leader crossed the line Si had drawn on the persimmon tree through his sights, his musket cracked, and the horse reared and fell over in the mud. Shorty broke the shoulder of the next horse, and the rider had to jump off.

"Bully shots, boys. Do it again," shouted the Captain of Co. Q, hurrying some men farther to the right, to concentrate a fire upon the exposed point.

Si and Shorty hastily reloaded, and fired again at the rebels, who had pressed on toward the fence, in spite of

the fall of their leader. But not having at the moment an object in line to sight on, Si and Shorty did not succeed in bringing anybody down. But as they looked to see the effect, they also saw a cannon-flash from a hill



A CLOSE CALL.

away off behind the cavalry, and the same instant its rifled shot took the top off the young oak about six feet above Si's head.

Shorty was the first to recover his wits and tongue.

"Dog-goned if somebody else hain't been drawin' "

bead on trees," he said, looking into Si's startled face. "Knows how to shoot, too."

"I didn't notice that measly gun come up there. Did you, Shorty?" said Si, trying to get his heart back out of his mouth, so that he could speak plainly.

"No, I didn't. But it's there all the same, and the fellows with it have blood in their eyes. Let's run over to where the other boys are. I'm a private citizen. I don't like so much public notice."

They joined the squad which was driving back the rebels who had started out to break the fence.

Presently the cavalry wheeled about and disappeared in the woods. The rear was scarcely out of sight, and the 200th Ind. was just beginning to feel a sense of relief, when there was a sputter of shots and a chorus of yells away off to the extreme left.

"Just as I expected," grumbled Shorty. "They are jumping the rear of the train now."

Leaving Co. A to watch the head of the train, the rest of the regiment bolted off on the double-quick for the rear. They did not get there a moment too soon. Not soon enough, in fact. As they came over the crest of the hill they saw Co. B, which had been with the rear, having more than it could attend to with a horde of yelling, galloping rebels, who filled the little valley. Co. B's boys were standing up manfully to their work, and popping away at the rebels from behind fences and rocks, but the latter had already gotten away from them a wagon which had been far to the rear, had cut loose the mules and run them off, and were plundering the wagon, and trying to start a fire under it.

The fusillade which the regiment opened as the men gained the crest of the hill, put a different complexion on the affair. The rebels recognized the force of circumstances, and speedily rode back out of range, and then

out of sight. As the last of them disappeared over the hill the wearied regiment dropped down all around to rest.

"We can't rest long, boys," said the sympathetic Colonel, "We've got to start these wagons along."



THE FRIGHTENED TEAMSTER.

Presently he gave the order:

"Go back to your wagons, now, and get them out as quickly as you can."

Si and Shorty took a circuit to the left to get on some sod which had not been trampled into mortar. They heard a volley of profanity coming from a cedar brake still farther to the left, and recognized the voice of their

teamster. They went thither, and found Groundhog, who had fled from the scene, after the manner of his race, at the first sound of the firing, but had been too scared to fasten up his traces when he unlatched his saddle mule. These had flapped around, as he urged his steed forward, and the hooks had caught so firmly into the cedars when he plunged into the thicket that he was having a desperate time getting them loose.

"You dumbbed, measly coward," said Si. "I told you I'd blow your head offen you if you didn't stay by them mules. I ought to do it."

"Don't, Si," said Shorty. "He deserves it, and we kin do it some other time. But we need him now in our business. He hain't much of a head, but it's all that he's got—and he can't drive without it. Le's git the mule loose first."

They got the mule out and turned him around toward the wagons.

"Now," said Shorty, addressing Groundhog, "you white-livered son-in-law of a jackass, git back to that wagon as fast you kin go, if you don't want me to run this bayonet through you."

There was more straining and prying in the dreary rain and fathomless mud to get the wagons started.

"Shorty," said Si, as they plodded alongside the road, with a rail on one shoulder and a gun on the other, "I really believe that this is the toughest day we've had yet. What d'you s'pose father and mother'd say if they could see us?"

"They'd probably say we wuz earning our \$13 a month, with \$100 bounty at the end o' three years," snapped Shorty, who was in no mood for irrelevant conversation.

So the long, arduous day went. When they were not pulling, pushing, prying, and yelling, to get the wagons out of mud holes, they were rushing over the clogging,

plowed fields to stand off the nagging rebel cavalry, which seemed to fill the country as full as the rain, the mud, the rocks and the weeping cedars did. As night drew on they came up to lines of fires where the different divisions were going into line-of-battle along the banks of Stone River. The mud became deeper than ever, from the trampling of tens of thousands of men and animals, but they at least did not have the aggravating rebel cavalry to bother them. They found their division at last in an old cottonfield, and were instantly surrounded by a crowd of hungry, angry men.

"Where in blazes have you fellers bin all day?" they shouted. "You ought to've got up here hours ago. We're about starved."

"Go to thunder, you ungrateful whelps," said Si. "You kin git your own wagons up after this. I'll never help guard another wagon-train as long as I'm in the army."

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE STORMY BANKS OF STONE RIVER.

The fagged-out 200th Ind. was put in reserve to the brigade, which lay in line-of-battle.

After having got the train safely into camp, the regiment felt that it was incapable of moving another foot.

While their coffee was boiling Si and Shorty broke off a few cedar branches to lay under them, and keep them out of the mud. The rain still drizzled, cold, searching and depressing, but they were too utterly tired to do anything more than spread their overcoats on the branches, lay their blankets and ponchos over, and crawl in between.

In the few minutes which they allowed to elapse between getting into camp and going to sleep they saw and heard something of the preparations going on around them for the mighty battle, but body and brain were too weary to properly "sense" these. They hardly cared what might happen to-morrow. Rest for to-day was everything. They were too weary to worry about anything in the future.

"It certainly looks, Shorty," said Si, as he crawled in, "like as if the circus was in town, and the big show'd come off to-morrow, without regard to the weather."

"Let it come and be blamed to it," snorted Shorty. "They can't git up nothin' wuss'n we've bin havin' to-day, let them try their durnedest. But I tell you, Mr. Si Klegg, I want you to lay mighty still to-night. If you git to rollin' around in your usual animated style and tanglin' up the bedclothes, I'll kick you out into the rain, and make you stay there. Do you hear me?"

"You bet I'll lay quiet," said Si, as together they gave the skillful little kick only known to veteran campaigners by which they brought the blankets snugly up around their feet. "You could sooner wake up a fence-rail than me. I want to tell you, too, not to git to dreamin' of pryin' wagons out of the mud, and chasin' rebel cavalry. I won't have it."

The reveille the next morning would have promptly awakened even more tired sleepers than Si and Shorty. Even before the dull, damp drums began rolling and the fifes shrieking the air of enforced gaiety along the sinuous line of blue which stretched for miles through red, muddy cotton-fields and cedar tangles wet as bath-room sponges, there came from far away on the extreme right a deepening roll of musketry, punctuated with angry cannon-shots and the faint echo of yells and answering cheers.

"That's McCook opening the battle," said the officers, answering the anxious looks of the men. "He's to hold the rebels out there, while Crittenden sweeps around on the left, captures Murfreesboro, and takes them in the rear."

Miles away to the left came the sound of musketry and cannons, as if to confirm this. But the firing there died down, while that to the right increased with regular, crashing volleys from muskets and artillery.

The 200th Ind. was in that exceedingly trying position for soldiers, where they can hear everything but see nothing. The cedar thicket in which they stood shut off the view in every direction. The Colonel kept officers and men standing strictly in place, ready for any contingency. Si and Shorty leaned on their muskets and anxiously watched the regimental commander as he sat rigidly in his saddle, with his fixed gaze bent in the direction of the awful tumult. The Adjutant had ridden for-

ward a little ways to where he could get a better view. The other officers stood stiffly in their places, with the points of their drawn swords resting on the ground, and their hands clasped on the hilts, and watched the Colonel intently. Sometimes they would whisper a few words to



THERE'LL BE A MILLION REBELS ON TOP O' YOU.

those standing near them. The Captain of Co. Q drew geometric figures in the mud with the point of his sword.

Constantly the deafening crash came nearer, and crept around farther to the right.

Si gave a swift glance at Shorty. His partner's teeth were set, his face drawn and bloodless, his eyes fixed immovably on the Colonel.

"Awful fightin' goin' on out there, Shorty," said Si, in hushed voice. "I'm afraid they're lickin' our fellers."

"Confound it!" snorted Shorty, "why in thunder don't they move us out, and give us something to do? This is hell standin' here listenin'."

A teamster, hatless and coatless, with his hair standing up, came tearing through the brush, mounted on his saddle-mule.

A chorus of yells and curses greeted his appearance. It was immense relief for the men to have something to swear at.

"Run, you egg-sucking hound."

"Run, you scald-headed dominic

"Somebody busted a cap in your neighborhood, old white-liver?"

"Seen the ghost of a dead rebel, Pilgarlic?"

"Pull back your eyes, you infernal mulewhacker. A limb'll brush 'em off."

"Look at his hair—standin' up stiffer'n bristles on a boar's back."

"Your mule's got more sand 'n you. They're standing where you left 'em."

"Of course, you're whipped and all cut to pieces. You was that when you heard the first gun crack."

"Get out of the way, and let him run himself to death. That's all he's fit for."

"You've no business in men's clothes. Put on petticoats."

"Go it, rabbit; go it, cotton-tail—you've heard a dog bark."

"Chickee—chickee—skip for the barn. Hawk's in the air."

"Let him alone. He's in a hurry to get back and pay his sutler's bill."

The teamster gasped out:

"You'd better all git out o' here as fast as the Lord'll let you. Johnston's Division's cut all to pieces and runnin'. There'll be a million rebels on top o' you in another minnit."

"Capt. McGillicuddy," said the Colonel sternly, but without turning his head, "either bayonet that cowardly rascal or gag him and tie him to a tree."

The Captain turned to give the order to Corp'l Klegg, but the teamster struck his mule with his whip, and went tearing on through the brush before the order could be given.

Some severely-wounded men came slowly pushing their way through the chaparral.

"It's awful hot out there," they said. "The rebels got the start of us, and caught our battery horses off to water. They outflanked us bad, but the boys are standin' up to 'em and they're gettin' help, and 'll lick the stuffin' out of 'em yet."

The regiment gave the plucky fellows a cheer.

A riderless horse, frantic from his wounds and the terrific noise, tore through the brush, and threatened to dash over Co. Q. Si and Shorty saw the danger, and before the Captain could give an order they sprang forward, and, at considerable risk, succeeded in getting hold of the reins and partially calming the poor brute. The eagles on the saddlecloth showed that he belonged to a Colonel. He was led to the rear, and securely haltered to a young cedar. The incident served a purpose in distracting for awhile the attention of the regiment.

The noise in front and to the right swept farther away for a little while, and the men's hearts rose with a cheer.

"Now the reinforcements are getting in. Why in the world don't they send us forward?" they said.

The Colonel still sat rigidly, with his face straight to the front.

Then the noise began to roll nearer again, and the men's hearts to sink.

The wounded men coming back became a continuous procession. They spoke less confidently, and were anxi-



"THE WHOLE CONFEDERACY'S OUT THERE."

ous to know what was taking place on other parts of the line.

"The whole infernal Southern Confederacy's out there," said one boy, who was holding his shattered right hand

in his left, with his thumb pressed hard on the artery, to stanch the blood, "in three lines-of-battle, stretching from daybreak to sunset. The boys have been standing them off bully, though, but I don't know how long they



TWO MUSICIANS CAME LABORING THROUGH.

can keep it up. Thomas and Crittenden thought to be walking right over everything, for there can't be anybody in front of them. They're all out there."

Two musicians came laboring through, carrying a

stretcher on which was an officer with part of his face shot away. Si felt himself growing white around the mouth and sick at the stomach, but he looked the other way, and drew in a long, full breath.

The storm now seemed to be rolling toward them at railroad speed. Suddenly the woods became alive with men running back, some with their guns in their hands, many without. Some were white with fear, and silent; some were in a delirium of rage, and yelling curses. Officers, bareheaded, and wildly excited, were waving their swords, and calling regiments and companies by name to halt and rally.

The Adjutant came galloping back, his horse knocking the fugitives right and left. He shouted, to make himself heard in the din:

"The whole division is broken and going back. Our brigade is trying to hold the rebels. They need us at once."

The Colonel turned calmly in his saddle, and his voice rang out clear, distinct, and measured, as if on parade:

"Attention, 200th Indiana!"

"Load at will—LOAD!"

A windrow of bright ramrods flashed and weaved in the air. A wave of sharp, metallic clicks ran from one end of the line to the other.

"Shoulder—ARMS!"

"Right—FACE!"

"Forward—MARCH!"

What happened immediately after emerging from the cedars Si could never afterward distinctly recall. He could only vaguely remember—as one does the impressions of a delirium—seeing, as the regiment swung from column into line, a surging sea of brown men dashing forward against a bank of blue running along a rail fence, and from which rose incessant flashes of fire and

clouds of white smoke. The 200th Ind. rushed down to the fence, to the right of the others; the fierce flashes flared along its front; the white smoke curled upward from it. He did not remember any order to begin firing; did not remember when he began. He only remembered presently feeling his gun-barrel so hot that it burned his hand, but this made him go on firing more rapidly than before. He was dimly conscious of his comrades dropping around him, but this did not affect him. He also remembered catching sight of Shorty's face, and noticing that it was as black as that of a negro, but this did not seem strange.

He felt nothing, except a consuming rage to shoot into and destroy those billows of brown fiends surging incessantly toward him. Consciousness only came back to him after the billows had surged backward into the woods, leaving the red mud of the field splotted with brown lumps, which had lately been men.

As his mind cleared his hand flinched from the hot gun-barrel, and he looked down curiously to see the rain-drops turn into steam as they struck it. His throat was afire from the terrible powder thirst. He lifted his canteen to his lips and almost drained it. He drew a long breath, and looked around to see what had happened since they left the cedars. Shorty was by his side, and unhurt. He now understood why his face was so black. He could feel the thick incrustation of powder and sweat on his own. Several of Co. Q were groaning on the ground, and the Captain was detailing men to carry them back to where the Surgeon had established himself. Two were past all surgery, staring with soulless eyes into the lowering clouds.

"Poor Bill and Ebe," said Si, gazing sorrowfully at the bodies. "Co. Q will miss them. What good boys they"—
"Were" stuck in his throat. That those strong, act-

ive, ~~ever-ready~~ comrades of a few minutes before now merely "were" was unspeakable.

His thoughts were distracted by a rebel battery on the hill sending a volley of shells at the fence. Some went over, and tore gaps in the cedars beyond. One struck the corner of the fence near him, and set the rails to flying.

"I like fence-rails in their place as well as any man," said Shorty, as they dodged around; "but a fence-rail's got no business sailin' round in the air like a bird."

An Aid rode up to the Colonel.

"The General's compliments, Colonel. He directs me to express to you his highest compliments on the splendid manner in which you have defended your position. You and your men have done nobly. But we are out-flanked, and it will be necessary to retire to a new position about a half-mile to the rear. You will withdraw your regiment by companies, so as to attract as little attention from the enemy as possible. As soon as they are under cover of the cedars you will move rapidly to the new position."

"Very well," said the Colonel, saluting. "You will be good enough to say to the General that my men and myself appreciate highly his praise. We are proud to receive it, and shall try to deserve it in the future. His orders shall be immediately obeyed."

"They call this a civil war," said Shorty, as another volley of shells tore around. "Seems to me sometimes that it's too durned civil. If we're goin' to git out of here, we might save compliments for a quieter time."

One by one the companies filed back into the cedars, Co. Q being the last. Just as they started the rebels on the opposite hill discovered the movement, raised a yell, and started across the field

"Halt--Front!" commanded the Captain. "Those fel-

lows are too tumultuous and premature. We must check them up a little. Wait till they come to that little branch, then everybody pick his man and let him have it. Aim below the belt."

The frenzy of the first struggle was now gone from Si's mind; instead had come a deadly determination to make every shot tell.

"I'm goin' to fetch that mounted officer on their right," he said to Shorty and those around him.

"Very well," said Shorty. "I'll take that Captain near him who's wavin' his sword and yellin'. The rest o' you fellers pick out different men."

The rebel line was in the weeds which bordered the branch when the Captain gave the order to fire.

When the smoke rose the mounted officer and the yelling Captain were down.

"If somebody else didn't get them, we did," said Shorty, as they turned and rushed back into the cedars.

The rebels were only checked momentarily. They soon came swarming on, and as Co. Q crashed through the cedars the rebels were yelling close behind. Fortunately, they could not do any effective firing, on account of the brush. But when they came to the edge of the thicket there was a long run across a furrowed, muddy cottonfield, to reach the knoll on which the brigade was reforming. The battery was already in action there, throwing shells over the heads of Co. Q at the rebels swarming out of the cedars in pursuit.

Si and Shorty threw away overcoats, blankets, haversacks and canteens—everything which would impede their running, except their guns and cartridge-boxes. Their caps were gone, and Si had lost one shoe in the mud. They all sat down on the ground for a minute and panted to get their breath.

The rebels were checked, but only temporarily. They

were thronging out in countless multitudes, lining up into regiments and brigades, preparatory to a rush across the field upon the brigade. Away to the right of the brigade rebel batteries had been concentrated, which were shelling it and the ground to the rear, to prevent any assistance being sent it.

"Captain," said the Colonel, riding up to Co. Q, "the General says that we have got to stay here and hold those fellows back until the new line can be formed along the pike. We haven't ammunition enough for another fight. You'll have to send a Corporal and a squad back to the pike to bring up some more. Pick out men that'll be sure to come back, and in a hurry."

"Corp'l Klegg," said the Captain, without an instant's hesitation, "you hear what's to be done. Take five men and go."

Si looked around to see if there was someone he could borrow a shoe from. But that was hardly a time when men were likely to lend shoes. He picked Shorty and four others. They flung down their guns and started on a run for the pike.

The batteries were sweeping the fields with shells, but they were so intent on their errand that they paid no attention to the demoniac shrieks of the hurtling pieces of iron.

They gained the other side of the field, but as they entered the welcome shelter of the woods they encountered an officer with a drawn sword, commanding a line of men.

"Stop there, you infernal, cowardly rascals," he yelled. "Pick up those guns there, and get into line, or I'll shoot you. You, Corporal, ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"We're after ammunition for the 200th Ind.," gasped Si. "We must have it right away. Where's the division ammunition train?"

"That ammunition story's played. Can't work it on me. Where's your regiment? Where's your caps? Where's your shoes? Where's your guns? You're rattled out of your senses. Stop here and cool off. Pick up guns there and fall into line."

"Name o' God, Lieutenant," said Shorty excitedly. "This's no time for any foolishness. Our regiment's out there on the hill without any ammunition. The rebels are gittin' ready to jump it, four or five to one. Don't fool, for heaven's sake. There's not a minute to waste. Come with us and help us git the ammunition. That's a blamed sight more important than stoppin' these here runaways, who're no good when they are stopped. Come along, for God's sake."

His earnestness impressed the Lieutenant.

"Lieut. Evans," he called out, "take command of the line, while I go back with these men to the ammunition-train. I can get it quicker for them than they can. Your Colonel should have sent a commissioned officer with you."

"The Colonel needs all the officers he has left with him," panted Shorty, running ahead of the rest. "Everybody back there's got all he can attend to, and we couldn't really be spared."

There was a crowd of similar men surging around the ammunition wagons, each eager to get his load and rush back. The covers of the wagons had been torn off, and a man stood in each, pitching the boxes to the clamoring details. All were excited and reckless. The pitching would be wild, or the catching bad, and occasionally a box would strike a man on the head or the body and knock him down. He would scarcely stop to swear, but snatch up his precious box and rush off toward his regiment.

"Open out here, let us in," commanded the Lieutenant striking right and left with the flat of his sword. It was

not a moment for gentle courtesies. The crowd opened up, and Si and Shorty pushed in near the wheels.

"Now give us six boxes in a hurry," commanded the Lieutenant.

Si caught the first box, Shorty the second, and before the Lieutenant was hardly done speaking the rest had theirs, and started back on the run, accompanied by the Lieutenant. The boxes were very heavy and the mud was deep, but they went faster than they had ever done, even when running from the rebels.

"I'm awfully afraid you'll have a time getting across the field there," said the Lieutenant, as they came to the edge, and he surveyed the ground in front doubtfully. "Lieut. Evans says they've moved a battery up closer, and are sweeping the field with canister."

"We don't care what they're shootin'," said Si resolutely. "We're goin' back to the regiment with these boxes, or die a-tryin'."

"Go on, then, and God help you," said the Lieutenant. "I'd go with you if I could do any good."

Si arranged his box for a desperate rush. A blast of canister swept through, cutting down shrubs, splattering the mud, and shrieking viciously.

"Let's get as far as we can before they fire again," he shouted, and plunged forward. Half-way across the field his foot caught in a "devil's shoe-string," and down he went in the mud, with the heavy box driving him deeper.

Just then another blast of canister hurtled across the field.

"Golly, it was lucky, after all, that I was tripped," said Si, rising, stunned and dripping. "That load of canister was meant for me personally."

Two minutes later he flung the box down before the company, and sank panting on the ground. The others came up after. Some had been grazed by canister, but

none seriously wounded. They arrived just in the nick of time, for the regiment had expended its last cartridge in repulsing the last assault, and was now desperately fixing bayonets to meet the next with cold steel. The



A LUCKY FALL.

lids of the boxes were pried off with bayonets, and the Sergeants ran along the companies distributing the packages. The assault was met with a stream of fire, given with steady deadliness, which sent the rebels back to their covert.

An Aid dashed across the field to the brigade commander.

A GLOOMY NEW YEAR'S DAY.

"The line is now formed," he said. "Retire your command to it."

That night, after the battle had ceased, Si and Shorty were seated on a rail by the Nashville pike munching rations which they had luckily found in a thrown-away haversack. They were allowed no fires, they had no blankets nor overcoats, and it was bitter cold.

"Shorty, you said last night you was sure that they couldn't git up nothin' to-day that'd be as bad as what we had yesterday," said Si. "I believe that I'd rather guard wagon-trains and fight cavalry than have such another day as this."

"I think the lake of brimstone'd be a pleasant change from this," snorted Shorty.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NIGHT AFTER THE BATTLE.

It was so desperately cold and comfortless that Si and Shorty felt that they must do something or perish.

There were some fragments of cracker-boxes near. With these they dug a hole several inches deep, put some splinters in, and started a stealthy blaze. They were careful to sit on the side toward the rebels, the better to hide from them any sight of it. It was a very small fire, but there was more relief in it than Si had before gotten from those a thousand times larger. It kept his unshod foot from freezing, and brought the blood back to his numb hands.

"Just think, Shorty," murmured Si; "night before last we had a whole panel of fence on the fire, and all our blankets and overcoats, and yet you kicked, Shorty. I believe this is a judgment on you for not being thankful for what you receive."

"Judgment be blowed," ejaculated Shorty. "This ain't no judgment; it's just durned luck—that is, what isn't foolishness in sendin' a boy to mill. If we'd had only half as many men out there in the cedars as the rebels had we'd licked thunder out of 'em. We simply couldn't whip four or five to one. McCook didn't size up his job right."

"Well, we have something to be thankful for," said Si, determined to see the bright side of things. "Neither of us got hurt, which is a blessing."

"Don't know whether it is or not. If we are goin' to freeze to death before mornin' I'd rather've bin shot the first volley."

The misty darkness around them was filled with noise and motion. Men who had become separated from their regiments were wandering around trying to find them, in the bewildering maze of men, wagons, and animals. Officers were calling aloud the names of regiments to bring together stragglers. Aids were rushing around to find Generals and Colonels to give and receive orders and instructions. Regiments and batteries were marching hither and yon to get into position and complete the formation of the line for the morrow's battle. The 200th Ind., which had fallen back in good order with its brigade, was well together, and made an island around which a restless sea of humanity flowed and eddied. Cheerless as was its bivouac in the cold mud, yet it was infinitely preferable to being lost in the inextricable confusion that reigned over those cottonfields on that sorrowful night of Dec. 31, 1862.

"I'm not goin' to freeze to death," said Si, starting up, at last. "I'm going to look around and see if I can't find something to make us more comfortable. Shorty, hold on to that hole in the ground. It's all that we've got left in the world, and if we lose that I don't know what'll become of us.

"Better stay here, and not go wanderin' off into that mob," remonstrated Shorty." You'll git lost entirely, and never find your way back."

"I'll not get lost," responded Si. "I've got the lay o' the ground in my mind. If I did," he continued proudly, "it'd be easy to find you agin. Everybody knows where the 200th Ind. is."

He went only a little ways, and carefully, at first. He was rewarded by kicking against an object which upon examination proved to be a well-filled knapsack, which someone had flung away in his hurry. He carried it back, rejoicing, to Shorty.

"Finders is keepers," said Shorty, unbuckling the knapsack. "We'll just call this fair exchange for what we've throwed away in to-day's hustle. Let's open her up."



FINDING A GOOD THING.

"Some new recruit's," said Si, as they examined the inside. "Looks like the one I packed from Injianny. What's this? I declare if it aint a pair o' new shoes, and

about my size; and some socks. I tell you, Shorty, I'm in luck."

He pulled the muddy socks off his shoeless foot, and drew on one of the warm, homemade affairs, and then the shoe. Both fitted well. He put on the other sock and shoe, and life at once seemed brighter.

"Shorty," said he, "I shouldn't wonder if I could find a blanket and an overcoat. You keep on holding that hole down, and I'll go out agin. I won't be gone long, for I'm dead tired. Just as soon as I find an overcoat or a blanket to put between us and the mud, I'll come back and we'll lay down. Every joint in me aches."

He started off less carefully this time. His new shoes made him feel more like walking. He was some distance from the regiment before he knew it. He found an overcoat. It had been trampled into the mud by thousands of passing feet, but still it was an overcoat, and it was not a time to be too nice about the condition of a garment. Presently he found a blanket in similar condition. He pulled on the overcoat, and threw the blanket over his shoulders. He felt warmer, but they were very heavy. Still, he thought he would go on a little ways further, and perhaps he would find another overcoat and blanket, which would fix out both him and his partner.

All this time men were sweeping by him in companies, regiments and squads, batteries were moving in all directions, and mounted officers were making their way to and fro. Filling up the spaces between these were hundreds of men, single and in small groups, wandering about in search of their regiments, and inquiring of everyone who would stop to listen to them as to the whereabouts of regiments, brigades and divisions. No one could give any satisfactory information. Organizations which had formed a line two miles long in the morning had been driven back, frequently in tumult and dis-

order, for miles through the thickets and woods. Fragmentary organizations had been rallied from time to time. A fragment of a regiment would rally at one point with fragments of other regiments and make a stand, while other fragments would rally at widely separated places and renew the fight, only to be pushed back again toward the Nashville Pike. Regiments and brigades that had remained nearly intact had been rapidly shifted from one point to another, as they were needed, until the mind could not follow their changes, or where nightfall had found them, or whither they had been shifted to form the new line.

At last Si succeeded in picking up another overcoat and blanket out of the mud, and started to go back to the regiment.

But where was the regiment? He had long since lost all track of its direction. He had been so intent upon studying the ground for thrown-away clothing that he had not noticed the course he had taken.

It suddenly dawned on him that he was but one drop in that great ocean of 35,000 men, surging around on the square miles lying between the Nashville Pike and Stone River. He looked about, but could see nothing to guide him. His eyes rested everywhere on dark masses of moving men. Those immediately around him were inquiring weariedly for their own regiments; they had no patience to answer inquiries as to his own. Discouraged, he determined to walk as straight ahead as possible in the direction which he had come, and see where that would bring him. He was so tired that he could scarcely drag one foot after another, but he plodded on. At length he drew out of the throng a little, and saw that he was approaching the banks of a large stream. This disheartened him, for they had not been within miles of Stone River during the day. He saw a group of men

huddled around a larger fire than had been permitted near the front. This, too, was discouraging, for it showed that he had been forging toward the rear. But he went up to the group and inquired:

"Do any o' you know where the 200th Ind. is?"

The men had become wearied out answering similar questions, and were as cross as soldiers get to be under similar circumstances.

"The 200th Ind.," snapped one; "better go back to the rear-guard and inquire. The straggler-ketchers 've got 'em."

"No," said another; "they skipped out before the rear-guard was formed, and were all drowned trying to swim the Cumberland."

"They say the Colonel went on foot," said a third, "and was the first man in the regiment to reach Nashville. Made the best long-distance run on record."

"You infernal liars," roared Si; "if I wasn't so tired I'd lick the whole caboodle of you. But I'll say this: Any man who says that the 200th Ind. run, or that our brave Colonel run, or that any man in it run, is a low-down, measly liar, and hain't a grain o' truth in him, and he daresn't take it up."

It was a comprehensive challenge, that would have met with instantaneous response at any other time, but now the men were too exhausted for such vanities as fisticuffs.

"O, go off and find your rattled, lousy Hoosiers," they shouted in chorus. "Go talk to the Provost-Marshal about 'em. He's got the most of 'em. The rest are breaking for the Wabash as fast as their legs can carry them. Don't be bothering us about that corn-cracking, agery crowd."

"Where'd you leave your regiment, you chuckle-headed straggler?"

"You were so rattled you couldn't tell which way they went."

"Where's your gun?"



SI'S CHALLENGE.

"Where's your cartridge-box and haversack?"

"Where's your cap?"

"You were so scared you'd a' throwed away your head if it'd been loose!"

"Clear out from here, you dead-beat."

Si was too sick at heart to more than resolve that he would remember each one of them, and pay them off at some more convenient time. He turned and walked back as nearly as possible in the direction in which he had come. He knew that his regiment was at the front, and he had been forging toward the rear. He knew vaguely that the front was somewhere near the Nashville Pike, and as he wearily wound around and through the bewildering masses, he inquired only for the Nashville Pike.

He reached the Pike, at last, just as he was sinking with fatigue. The dreary rain had set in again, and he had determined to give the thing up, and sit down and wait for morning. He saw a feeble glimmer of light at a distance, and decided to make one more effort to reach it, and inquire for his regiment.

"Partner, have you any idee where the 200th Ind. is?" he said meekly to the man who was crouching over the fire in the hole.

"Hello, Si," said Shorty. "I had given you up long ago. Of course, you went off and got lost in that mob, as I told you you would. Next time you'll have sense enough to mind what I say."

"O, Shorty," groaned Si, "don't say nothing. I've nigh walked my legs offen me. I think I've tramped over every foot of ground betwixt here and Overall's Crick. But I've brought back two overcoats and two blankets."

"That's bully," answered Shorty, much mollified. "Say, I've got an idee. D'you see that white thing over there? That's a wagon. The mules 've been taken away, and it's been standing there for an hour. I've seen the Lieutenants and the Orderly-Sergeant sneak back there, and I know what they're up to. They're goin' to sleep in the wagon. Of course, they're officers, and got the first

pick. But we kin lay down under it, and get out of the rain. Besides, it looks as if the ground was drier up there than it is down here."

They slipped quietly back to the wagon, and were lucky enough to find a little hay in the feed-box, which they could lay down to spread their blankets upon. They pulled the tail-gate off and set it up on the side from which the rain was coming.

"There," said Shorty, as they crawled in. "Si, what'd you do without me? Ain't I a comfort to you every minute of your life?"

"You certainly are, Shorty," said Si, as he fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GLOOMY NEW YEAR'S DAY ON THE BANKS OF STONE RIVER.

Si was awakened the next morning by the rain dashing down squarely on his upturned face. He was lying on



A DISAGREEABLE AWAKENING FOR SHORTY AND SI.

the flat of his back, sleeping the sleep of the utterly outworn, and he got the full force of the shower.

"Plague take it, Shorty," said he, kicking his snoring partner; "you're at your old tricks again—scrugin' me out o' the tent while I'm asleep. Why can't you lay still, like a white man?"

"It's you, dod-rot you," grumbled Shorty, half-awakening. "You're at your old trick o' kickin' the tent down. You need a 10-acre lot to sleep in, and then you'd damage the fence-corners."

They were both awake by this time, and looked around in amazement.

"We went to sleep nice and comfortable, under a wagon last night," said Shorty, slowly recalling the circumstances. "The two Lieutenants and the Orderly had the upper berth, and we slept on the ground-floor."

"Yes," assented Si; "and someone's come along, hitched mules to our bedroom and snaked it off."

"Just the way in the condemned army," grumbled Shorty, his ill-humor asserting itself as he sat up and looked out over the rain-soaked fields. "Never kin git hold of a good thing but somebody yanks it away. S'pose they thought that it was too good for a private soldier, and they took it away for some Major-General to sleep under."

"Well, I wonder what we're goin' to do for grub?" said Si, as his athletic appetite began to assert itself. "Our own wagons, that we had such a time guarding, are over there in the cedars, and the rebels are filling themselves up with the stuff that we were so good to bring up for them."

"It makes me jest sizzle," said Shorty, "to think of all we went through to git them condemned wagons up where they'd be handiest for them."

Si walked down the line toward where the Regimental Headquarters were established under a persimmon tree, and presently came back, saying:

"They say there's mighty small chance of gettin' any grub to-day. Wheeler burnt three or four miles of our wagons yesterday, and 's got possession of the road to Nashville. We've got to fight the battle out on empty stomachs, and drive these whelps away before we kin get a square meal."

Jan. 1, 1863, was an exceedingly solemn, unhappy New Year's Day for the Union soldiers on the banks of Stone River. Of the 41,000 who had gone into the line on the evening of Dec. 30, nearly 9,000 had been killed or wounded and about 2,000 were prisoners. The whole right wing of the army had been driven back several miles, to the Nashville Pike. Cannon, wagon-trains, tents and supplies had been captured by the enemy, the road to Nashville was in the hands of the rebel cavalry, which had burned miles of wagons, and the faint-hearted ones murmured that the army would have to surrender or starve.

There was not ammunition enough to fight another battle. The rebel army had suffered as heavily in killed and wounded, but it was standing on its own ground, near its own supplies, and had in addition captured great quantities of ours.

The mutual slaughter of the two armies had been inconceivably awful—inexpressibly ghastly, shuddering, sickening. They had pounded one another to absolute exhaustion, and all that sulken, lowering, sky-weeping Winter's day they lay and glared at one another like two huge lions which had fanged and torn each other until their strength had been entirely expended, and breath and strength were gone. Each was too spent to strike another blow, but each too savagely resolute to think of retreating.

All the dogged stubbornness of his race was now at fever point in Si's veins. Those old pioneers and farmers of the Wabash from whom he sprang were not particularly

handsome to look at, they were not glib talkers, nor well educated. But they had a way of thinking out—rather slowly and awkwardly it might be—just what they ought to do, and then doing it or dying in the effort—which made it very disastrous for whoever stood in their way. Those who knew them best much preferred to be along with them rather than against them when they set their square-cornered heads upon accomplishing some object.

Si might be wet, hungry, and the morass of mud in which the army was wallowing uncomfortable and discouraging to the last degree, but there was not the slightest thought in his mind of giving up the fight as long as there was a rebel in sight. He and Shorty were not hurt yet, and until they were, the army was still in good fighting trim.

The line of the 200th Ind. was mournfully shorter than it was two days before, but there were still several hundred boys of Si's stamp gathered resolutely around its flag, the game little Colonel's voice rang out as sharply as ever, and the way the boys picked up their guns and got into line whenever a sputter of firing broke out anywhere must have been very discouraging to Gen. Bragg and his officers, who were anxiously watching the Union lines through their glasses for signs of demoralization and retreat.

"We licked 'em yesterday, every time they come up squarely in front o' the 200th Ind.," Si said to Shorty and those who stood around gazing anxiously on the masses of brown men on the other side of the field. "We can do it again, every time. The only way they got away with us was by sneakin' around through the cedars and takin' us in the rear. We're out in the open ground now, an' they can't get around our flanks." And he looked to the extreme right, where every knoll was crowned with a battery of frowning guns.

"They got their bellies full o' fightin' yesterday," added Shorty, studying the array judicially. "They hain't none the brashness they showed yesterday mornin', when they were jumpin' us in front, right, left and rear at the same minute. They're very backward about comin' forward across them fields for us to-day. I only wish they'd try it on."

But the forenoon wore away without the rebels showing any disposition to make an assault across the muddy fields. Si's vigilant appetite took advantage of the quiet to assert its claims imperiously.

"Shorty," said he, "there must be something to eat somewhere around here. I'm goin' to look for it."

"You'll have just about as much chance of findin' it," said Shorty dolefully, "among that mob o' famished Suckers as you would o' findin' a straw-stack in the infernal regions. But I'll go 'long with you. We can't lose the regiment in the day time."

"By the way, Shorty," said Si, happening to glance at the sleeves of the overcoats which he had picked up, "we both seem to be Sergeants."

"That's so," assented Shorty. "Both these are Sergeant's overcoats. Well, we'll take our guns along, and play that we are on duty. It may help us out somewhere."

Things looked so quiet in front that the Captain gave them permission, and off they started. It seemed a hopeless quest. Everywhere men were ravenous for food. They found one squad toasting on their rammers the pieces of a luckless rabbit they had cornered in a patch of briars. Another was digging away at a hole that they alleged contained a woodchuck. A third was parching some corn found in a thrown-away feed box, and congratulating themselves upon the lucky find.

Finally they came out upon the banks of Stone River

at the place to which Si had wandered during the night. Si recognized it at once, and also the voices that came from behind a little thicket of paw-paws as those of the men with whom he had had the squabble.

Si motioned to Shorty to stop and keep silent, while he stepped up closer, parted the bushes a little, looked through, and listened.

Two men were standing by a fire, which was concealed from the army by the paw-paws. Four others had just come up, carrying rolled in a blanket what seemed to be a dead body. They flung it down by the fire, with exclamations of relief, and unrolled it. It was the carcass of a pig so recently killed that it was still bleeding.

"Hello," exclaimed the others joyfully; "where did you get that?"

"Why," exclaimed one of the others, "we were poking around down there under the bank, and we happened to spy a nigger cabin on the other side of the river, hid in among the willers, where nobody could see it. We thought there might be something over there, so we waded across. There wasn't anything to speak of in the cabin, but we found this pig in the pen. Jim bayoneted it, and then we wrapped it up in our blanket, as if we wuz taking a boy back to the Surgeon's, and fetched it along. We couldn't 've got a hundred yards through that crowd if they'd dreamed what we had. Jerusalem, but it was heavy, though. We thought that pig weighed a thousand pounds before we got here."

"Bully boys," said the others gleefully. "We'll have enough to eat, no matter how many wagons the rebels burn. I always enjoyed a dinner of fresh pork more on New Year's Day than any other time."

Si turned and gave Shorty a wink that conveyed more to that observant individual than a long telegram would have done. He winked back approvingly, brought up his

gun to a severely regulation "carry arms," and he and Si stepped briskly through the brush to the startled squad.

"Here," said Si, with official severity; "you infernal stragglers, what regiments do you belong to? Sneaking out here, are you, and stealin' hogs instead of being with your companies. Wrap that pig up again, pick it up, and come along with us to Headquarters."

For a minute it looked as if the men would fight. But Si had guessed rightly; they were stragglers, and had the cowardice of guilty consciences. They saw the chevrons on Si's arms, and his positive, commanding air finished them. They groaned, wrapped up the pig again, and Si mercifully made the two who had waited by the fire carry the heaviest part.

Si started them back toward the 200th Ind., and he and Shorty walked along close to them, maintaining a proper provost-guard-like severity of countenance and carriage.

The men began to try to beg off, and make advances on the basis of sharing the pork. But Si and Shorty's official integrity was incorruptible.

"Shut up and go on," they would reply to every proposition. "We ain't that kind of soldiers. Our duty's to take you to Headquarters, and to Headquarters you are going."

They threaded through the crowds for some time, and as they were at last nearing the regiment a battery of artillery went by at as near a trot as it could get out of the weary horses in that deep mire. The squad took advantage of the confusion to drop their burden and scurry out of sight in the throng.

"All right; let 'em go," grinned Si. "I wuz jest wonderin' how we'd get rid o' 'em. I'd thought o' takin' them into the regiment and then givin' them a chunk o' their pork, but then I'd get mad at the way they talked about the 200th Ind. last night, and want to stop and lick

'em. It's better as it is. We need all that pig for the boys."

Si and Shorty picked up the bundle and carried it up to the regiment. When they unrolled it the boys gave such lusty cheers that the rebels beyond the field rushed to arms, expecting a charge, and one of our impulsive cannoneers let fly a shell at them.

Si and Shorty cut off one ham for themselves and their particular cronies, carried the other ham, with their compliments, to the Colonel, and let the rest be divided up among the regiment.

One of their chums was lucky enough to have saved a tin box of salt, and after they had toasted and devoured large slices of the fresh ham they began to feel like new men, and be anxious for something farther to happen.

But the gloomy, anxious day dragged its slow length along with nothing more momentous than fitful bursts of bickering, spiteful firing, breaking out from time to time on different parts of the long line, where the men's nerves got wrought up to the point where they had to do something to get the relief of action.

Away out in front of the regiment ran a little creek, skirting the hill on which the rebels were massed. In the field between the hill and the creek was one of our wagons, which had mired there and been abandoned by the driver in the stampede of the day before. It seemed out of easy rifle-shot of the rebels on the hill.

Si had been watching it for some time. At length he said:

"Shorty, I believe that wagon's loaded with hardtack."

"It's certainly a Commissary wagon," said Shorty, after studying it a little

"Yes, I'm sure that it's one o' them wagons we was guardin', and I recollect it was loaded with hardtack."

The mere mention of the much-abused crackers made both their mouths water.

"Seems to me I recognize the wagon, too," said Shorty.

"Shorty, it'd be a great thing if we could sneak along up the creek, behind them bushes, until we come opposite the wagon, then make a rush acrost the field, snatch up a box o' hardtack apiece, and then run back. We'd get enough to give each o' the boys a cracker apiece. The wagon'd shelter us comin' and goin', and we wouldn't get a shot."

"It might be," said Shorty, with visions of distributing hardtack to the hungry boys warping his judgment. "The fellers right back o' the wagon couldn't shoot to any advantage, and them to the right and left are too fur off. If you say so, it's a go."

"If the boys could only have one hardtack apiece," said Si, as his last hesitation vanished, "they'd feel ever so much better, and be in so much better shape for a fight. Come on, let's try it."

The rest overheard their plan, and began to watch them with eager interest. They made a circle to the right, got into the cover of the brush of the creek, and began making their way slowly and carefully up to a point opposite the wagon. They reached this without attracting notice, parted the bushes in front of them carefully, and took a good survey of the wagon and the hill beyond.

The wagon was a great deal nearer the hill than Lad appeared to be the case from where the regiment lay, and even where they stood they were in very easy range of the rebels on the hill. But the latter were utterly unsuspecting of them. They were crouching down around fires, with their guns stacked, and the cannoneers of a couple of guns were at some distance from their pieces,

under a brush shelter, before which a fire smoldered in the rain.

"It's awful short range," said Si dubiously. "If they were lookin' they'd tear us and the wagon all to pieces. But our boys is a-watchin' us, and I don't want to go back without a shy at it. Them fellers seem so busy tryin' to keep warm that we may get there without their noticin' us."

"I never wanted hardtack so much in my life as I do this minute," said Shorty. "I don't want to live forever, anyway. Let's chance it."

They pulled off their overcoats, carefully tied up their shoes, shifted around so as to be completely behind the wagon, and then started on a rush through the mud.

For several hundred steps nothing happened, and they began to believe that they would reach the wagon unnoticed. Then a few shots sang over their heads, followed a minute later by a storm of bullets that struck in the mud and against the wagon. But they reached the wagon, and sat down, exhausted, on the tongue, sidling up close to the bed to protect them from the bullets.

Si recovered his breath first, caught hold of the front board and raised himself up, saw the boxes of coveted hardtack, and was just putting his hand on one of them when a shell struck the rear end and tore the canvas cover off. Si sank back again beside Shorty, when another shell burst under the wagon, and filled the air with pieces of wheels, bed, cracker-boxes and hardtack.

"I don't want no hardtack; I want to find the bank o' that crick," yelled Shorty, starting back on the jump, with Si just six inches behind.

The bullets spattered in the mud all around them as they ran, but they reached the creek bank without being struck. They were in such a hurry that they did not stop to jump, but fell headlong into the water.

"Them hardtack wuz spiled, anyway," said Shorty, as they fished themselves out, found their overcoats, and made their way back to the regiment.

They received the congratulations of their comrades on their escape, and someone fished out all the consolation that the regiment could offer—a couple of brierwood pipes filled with fragrant kinnikinnick. They sat down, smoked these, and tried to forget their troubles.

The cheerless night drew on. No fires were allowed, and the men huddled together on the wet ground, to get what comfort they could from the warmth of each other's bodies.

The temper of the rebels became nastier as the day wore away, and under the cover of the darkness they pushed out here and there and opened worrying fires on the Union line. Suddenly a battery opened up on the 200th Ind. from a bare knoll in front. The rebels had evidently calculated the range during daylight, and the shells struck around them in the most annoying way. They threw up showers of mud, scattered the groups, and kept everybody nervous and alarmed. The regiment stood this for some time, when an idea occurred to Si and Shorty. They went up to the Colonel and explained:

"Colonel, we've studied the ground out there purty carefully, and we know that the knoll where that battery is is in close range o' that crick where we went up this afternoon. If you'll let a few of us go out there we kin stop them cannoneers mighty soon."

"Sure of that?" said the Colonel alertly.

"Dead sure."

"Very well, then," said the Colonel promptly. "I've been thinking of the same thing. I'll take the whole regiment out. Put yourselves at the head, and lead the way."

The regiment was only too eager for the movement.

It marched rapidly after Si and Shorty up the creek bed, and in a very few minutes found itself on the flank of the obnoxious battery, which was still banging away into the line which the 200th Ind. had occupied. It was scarcely 200 yards away, and the men's hearts burned with a fierce joy at the prospect of vengeance. With whispered orders the Colonel lined up the regiment carefully on the bank, and waited until the battery should fire again, to make sure of the aim. Every man cocked his gun, took good aim, and waited for the order. They could distinctly hear the orders of the battery officers, directing the shelling. Three cannon were fired at once, and as their fierce lights flashed out, the Colonel gave the order to fire. A terrible simoon of death from the rifles of the 200th Ind. struck down everything in and around the battery

"That dog's cured o' suckin' aigs," said Shorty, as the Colonel ordered the regiment to about face and march back.

The 200th Ind. heard no more from that battery, that night.

CHAPTER IX.

VICTORY AT LAST FOR THE ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND.

On their way back from "settling the battery," Si and Shorty each broke off a big armful of cedar branches. These they spread down on the ground when the regiment resumed its place in the line-of-battle, and lay down on them to spend the rest of the night as comfortably as possible. The fire with which they had roasted the pig, and from which they had drawn much comfort during the day, had had to be extinguished when darkness came on. But it had dried out and warmed the ground for a considerable space around, and on this they made their bed.

"We seem to play in fair luck right along, Shorty," said the hopeful Si, as they curled up on the boughs. "Most of the boys 've to lay down in a foot of mud."

"Don't get to crowin' too loud," grumbled Shorty. "If they find out what a good thing we have, some Jigadier-Brindle'll snatch it away for himself." But Si was fast asleep before Shorty finished speaking.

Sometime before midnight the Orderly-Sergeant came around, and after vigorous kicking and shaking, succeeded in waking them.

"Get up," he said, "and draw some rations. The wagons've got in from Nashville."

"My gracious!" said Si, as soon as he was wide enough awake to understand the Orderly-Sergeant's words, "is it possible that we're going to have plenty ofhardtack and pork and coffee again? Seems to me a hundred years since we drew a full ration."

He and Shorty jumped up and ran over to where the

Quartermaster-Sergeant and his assistants were dealing out a handful of crackers and a piece of pork to each man as he came up.

"Mebbe I oughtn't to say it," said Si, as he munched away, taking a bite first off the crackers in his right and then off the meat in his left, "but nothing that ever mother baked tasted quite as good as this."

"This does seem to be a specially good lot," assented Shorty. "Probably a wagon load that they intended for the officers and give us by mistake. Better eat it all up before they find it out."

The morning of Jan. 2, 1863, dawned bleak and chill, but this at least brought the great comfort that the dreary rain was at last over. The sharp air was bracing, and put new life and hope into the hearts of the Union soldiers. Many wagons had been gotten up during the night, bringing food and ammunition for all. Soon after daylight cheerful fires were blazing everywhere, and the morning air was laden with the appetizing fragrance of boiling coffee and broiling meat. The sun began to rise over Murfreesboro' and the rebel camps, giving promise of a bright, invigorating day.

"I hope this thing'll be brought to a focus to-day, and the question settled as to who shall occupy this piece of real estate," said Shorty, as he and Si finished a generous breakfast, filled their boxes and pockets with cartridges, and began knocking the dried mud off their clothes and rubbing the rust from their guns. "I want them gents in brown clothes to clear out and leave. It frets me to see them hangin' 'round. They're bad neighbors."

"I hope," said Si, carefully picking out the tube of his gun with a pin, "we won't put in to-day as we did yester-

day—layin' 'round making faces an' shakin' our fists at one another. Let's have the thing out at once."

Evidently the rebels were of the same frame of mind. They saluted the dawn with a noisy fusillade that ran along the miles of winding line. It was spiteful, crashing and persistent, but as the Union lines lay beyond good musket range and the rebels showed no disposition to advance across the fields and come to close quarters, the noise was quite out of proportion to the harm done.

Then two rebel batteries on the opposite side of the river opened up a terrific fire upon one of our batteries, and the air seemed torn to shreds by the storm of howling missiles.

The 200th Ind. was too far away to have more than a spectacular interest in this tempestuous episode. They stood around their gun-stacks and watched and listened while the hours passed in ineffective noise, and wondered when the crisis of action was going to arrive.

"They seem to have lost their appetite for close acquaintance with the 200th Ind.," remarked Shorty. "They found that Jordan was a hard road to travel whenever they came across the fields at us, and are tryin' to scare us out by makin' a racket. I think we kin stand it as long as their powder kin. But I'm gittin' hungry agin. Let's have somethin' to eat."

"Good gracious, it is noon," answered Si, looking up at the sun. "I believe I do want some dinner."

They had scarcely finished dinner-eating when the 200th Ind. was ordered to move over toward Stone River. It halted on a little rise of ground on the bank, which commanded an extensive view on both sides of the river. There was a portentous flow in the great, dark-blue sea of men. The billows, crested with shining steel, were rolling eastward toward the river.

"Something's goin' to happen; meetin's about to break

up; school's goin' to let out," said Shorty eagerly. "Isn't it a grand sight."

"Gracious me!" said Si, devouring the spectacle with his eyes. "How I wish that father and mother and sister could see all this. It's worth going through a great deal to see this."

It was by far the most imposing spectacle they had yet seen. The whole Army of the Cumberland was crowded into the narrow space between the Nashville Pike and Stone River. Its compact regiments, brigades, and divisions showed none of the tearing and mangling they had endured, but stood or moved in well-dressed ranks that seemed the embodiment of mighty purpose and resistless force.

Around its grand array, a half mile away, lay the somber, portentous line of brown-clad men. Beyond them rose the steeples and roofs of the sleepy old town of Murfreesboro', with crowds of men and women occupying every point of vantage, to witness the renewal of the awful battle.

It was now long past noon. The bright sun had long ago scattered the chill mists of the morning, and radiated warmth and light over the dun landscape. Even the somber cedars lost some of the funereal gloom they wore when the skies were lowering.

"There go two brigades across the river," said Si. "We're goin' to try to turn their right."

They saw a long line of men file down the river bank, cross, and go into line on the high ground beyond. Their appearance seemed to stir the brown mass lying on the heights a mile in front of them to action. The rebels began swarming out of their works and moving forward into the woods.

Presently a thin line of men in butternut-colored clothes ran forward to a fence in front, and began throw-

ing it down. Behind them came three long, brown lines, extending from near the river to the woods far away to the left. Batteries galloped in the intervals to knolls, on which they unlimbered and opened fire.

It was an overpowering mass of men for the two little brigades to resist. Si's heart almost stood still as he saw the inequality of the contest.

"Why don't they send us over there to help those men?" he anxiously asked. "They can't stand up against that awful crowd."

"Just wait," said Shorty hopefully. "Old Rosy knows what he's doin'. He's got enough here for the business."

The artillery all along the line burst out in torrents of shells, but Si's eyes were glued on the two little brigades. He saw the white spurts from the skirmishers' rifles, and men drop among the rebels, who yet moved slowly forward, like some all-engulfing torrent. The skirmishers ran back to the main line, and along its front sped a burst of smoke as each regiment fired by volley. The foremost rebel line quivered a little, but moved steadily on.

Then a cloud of white smoke hid both Union and rebel lines, and from it came the sound as of thousands of carpenters hammering away industriously at nails.

Presently Si was agonized to see a fringe of blue break back from the bank of smoke, and run rapidly to the rear. They were followed by regiments falling back slowly, in order, and turning at the word of command to deliver volleys in the faces of their yelling pursuers.

Si looked at his Colonel, and saw him anxiously watching the brigade commander for orders to rush across the river to the assistance of the two brigades.

Suddenly there was a whirl in front. A battery galloped up, the drivers lashing the horses, the cannoneers sitting stolidly on the limbers with their arms folded. It

swept by to a knoll in front and to the right, which commanded the other side of the river. Instantly the gunners sprang to the ground, the cannon were tossed about as if they were playthings, and before Si could fairly wink he saw the guns lined up on the bank, the drivers



"SI KLEGG FELL WITHOUT A GROAN."

standing by the horses' heads, and the cannons belching savagely into the flanks of the horde of rebels.

Then another battery swept up alongside the first, and another, until 58 guns crowned the high banks and thundered until the earth shook as with the ague. A deluge of iron swept the fields where the mighty host of

rebels were advancing. Tops were torn out of trees and fell with a crash, fence-rails and limbs of oak went madly flying through the air, regiments and brigades disappeared before the awful blast.

For a few minutes Si and Shorty stood appalled at the deafening crash and the shocking destruction. Then they saw the rebels reel and fly before the tornado of death.

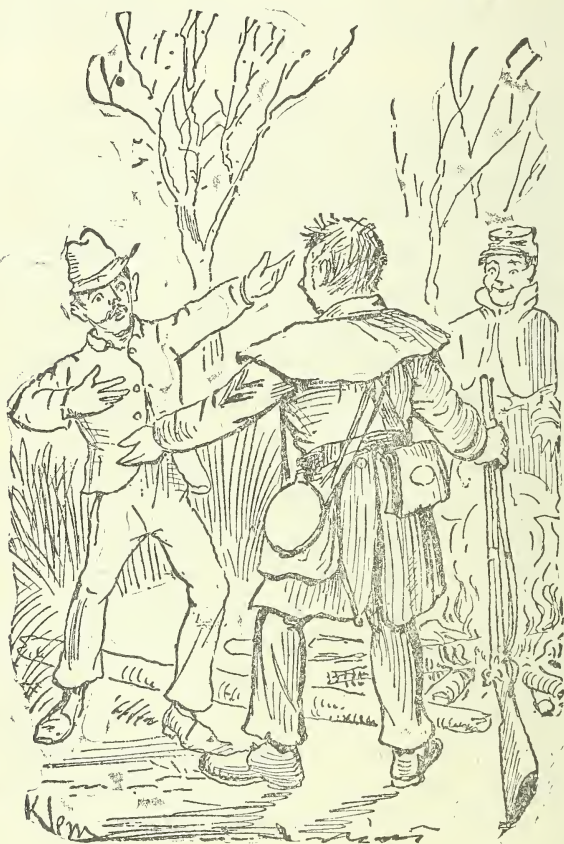
A great shout rose from thousands of excited men standing near. Regiments and brigades started as with one impulse to rush across the river and pursue the flying enemy. The 200th Ind. was one of these. No one heard any orders from the officers. The men caught the contagion of victory and rushed forward, sweeping with them the lately-defeated brigades, hurrying over the wreckage of the cannon-fire, over the thickly-strewn dead and wounded, and gathering in prisoners, flags and cannon.

They went on so, nearly to the breastworks behind which the rebels were seeking shelter

Si and Shorty were among the foremost. A few hundred yards from the rebel works Si fell to the ground without a groan. Shorty saw him, and ran to him. The side of his head was covered with blood, and he was motionless.

"Stone dead—bullet plum through his head," said the agonized Shorty. But there was no time for mourning the fallen. The pursuit was still hot, and Shorty's duty was in front. He ran ahead until the Colonel halted the regiment. Fresh rebels were lining up in the breastworks and threatening a return charge which would be disastrous. The Colonel hastily reformed the regiment to meet this, and slowly withdrew it in good order to resist any counter-attack. After marching a mile more or the regiment halted and went into bivouac. The rejoicing men started great fires and set about getting supper.

But the saddened Shorty had no heart for rejoicing over the victory, or for supper. He drew off from the rest, sat down at the roots of an oak, wrapped the cape of his overcoat about his face, and abandoned himself to his bitter



"YES, IT'S REALLY ME."

grief. Earth had no more joy for him. He wished he had been shot at the same time his partner was. He could think of nothing but that poor boy lying there dead and

motionless on the cold ground. He felt that he could never think of anything else, and the sooner he was shot the better it would be.

The other boys respected his grief. At first they tried to tempt him to eat something and drink some coffee, but Shorty would not listen to them, and they drew away, that he might be alone.

He sat thus for some hours. The loss of their sturdy Corporal saddened the whole company, and as they sat around their fires after supper they extolled his good traits, recounted his exploits, and easily made him out the best soldier in the regiment.

Presently the fifes and drums played tattoo, and the boys began preparations for turning in.

Shorty had become nearly frozen sitting there motionless, and he got up and went to the fire to thaw out. He had just picked up a rail to lay it on the fire in better shape, when he heard a weak voice inquiring:

"Does anybody know where the 200th Ind. is?"

Shorty dropped the rail as if he had been shot, and rushed in the direction of the voice. In an instant he came back almost carrying Si Klegg.

There was a hubbub around the fire that kept everybody from paying the least attention to "taps."

"Yes, it's really me," said Si, responding as well as he was able to the hearty handshakings. "And I ain't no ghost neither. I've got an appetite on me like a prairie fire, and if you fellers are really glad to see me you'll hustle up here all the grub in the Commissary Department. I can eat every mite of it. I wuz hit by a spent ball and knocked senseless. But I ain't going to tell you any more till I get something to eat."

CHAPTER X.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

The boys were so glad to see Si back again alive that they robbed themselves of any choice morsel of food they might have saved for to-morrow's delectation.

"Here, Si," said one, "is a nice knuckle-bone o' ham, that I pulled back there at the General's when his cook returned to the tent for something. You ought t've heard the nigger cussing as I walked away, but he couldn't recognize the back o' my head, nor see under my overcoat. Me and my chum 've had supper off it, and we wuz saving the rest for breakfast, but I'll brile it for you."

"Some of them Kentucky fellers," said another, "found a sheep in the briars and killed it. I traded 'em my silk handkerchief for a hunk o' the meat. I'm going to cook a slice for you, Si."

"Si, I'll bile some coffee for you," said a third.

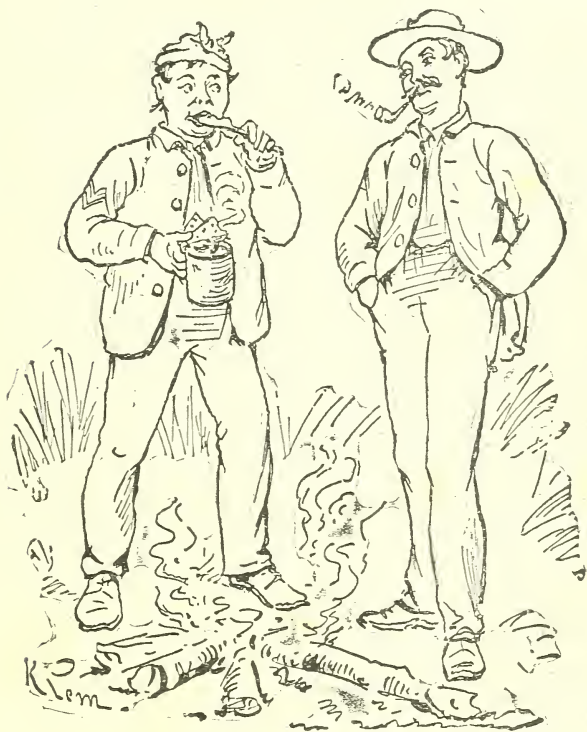
"I'll toast some crackers for you," added a fourth.

Shorty roused. He felt so much gladder than any of them, that he was jealous of their attentions.

"See here, you fellers," said he, "this is my partner, an' I'm able to take care of him. I'll bile all the coffee an' toast all the crackers he kin eat; though I'm much obliged to you, Jim, for your ham, and to you, Billy, for your mutton, though I'm afraid it'll taste too much of the wool for a wounded man."

"Don't mind about that," said Si; "I'm hungry enough to eat the wool on the sheep's back, even. Hand over your mutton, Billy, an' thankee for it. My appetite's not delicate, I can tell you. Woolly mutton won't faze it more'n bark would a buzz-saw."

Si didn't over-state the case. He ate everything that was cooked and offered him, until he declared that he was so full he "could touch it with his finger."



SHORTY THINKS SI DOES NOT LOOK LIKE A GHOST.

"I'm sure you're not a ghost, from the way you eat," said Shorty, who was beginning to recover his propensity for sarcasm. "If ghosts et like you there'd have to be a steam bakery an' a pork packery run in connection with every graveyard."

"And I'd never take no ghost to board," said Billy.

"Come, Si," said Jimmy Barlow, filling a briar-wood pipe with kinnikinnick, lighting it from the fire, taking a

few puffs to start it, and handing it to Si, "tell us just what happened to you. We're dyin' to hear."

"Well," said Si, settling down with the pipe into a comfortable position, "I don't know what happened. Last thing I knowed I wuz runnin' ahead on Shorty's left, loadin' my gun, an' tryin' to keep up with the Colonel's hoss. Next thing I knowed I wuz wakin' up at the foot of a black-oak. Everything was quiet around me, except the yellin' of two or three wounded men a little ways off. At first I thought a cannon-ball'd knocked my whole head off. Then it occurred to me that if my head was knocked off I couldn't hear nor see"—

"Nor think, even," injected Shorty.

"No, nor think, even. For what'd I to think with?"

"I know some fellers that seem to think with their feet, and that blamed awkwardly," mused Shorty.

"I kept on wakin' up," continued Si. "At first I thought I had no head at all, an' then it seemed to me I was all head, it hurt so awfully. I couldn't move hand nor foot. Then I thought mebbe only half my head was shot away, an' the rest was aching for all. I tried shuttin' one eye an' then the other, an' found I'd at least both eyes left. I moved my head a little, an' found that the back part was still there, for a bump on the roots of the oak hurt it.

"By-and-by the numbness began to go out of my head an' arm, but I was afraid to put my hand up to my head, for I was afraid to find out how much was gone. Nearly the whole of the left side must be gone, an' all my schoolin' scattered over the ground. I lay there thinkin' it all over—how awful I'd look when you fellers came to find me and bury me, an' how you wouldn't dare tell the folks at home about it.

"Finally, I got plum desperate. I didn't seem to be dyin', but to be gettin' better every minute. I determined

to find out just how much of my head was really gone. I put up my hand, timid-like, an' felt my forehead. It was all there. I passed my hand back over my hair an' the whole back of my head was there. I felt around carefully, an' there was the whole side of my head, only a little welt where I'd got a spent ball. Then I got mad an' I jumped up. Think of my makin' all that fuss over a little peck that might have been made by a brick-bat. I started out to hunt you fellers, an' here I am."

"Yes, but you wouldn't 've bin here," philosophized Shorty, examining the wound, "if the feller that fired that shot'd given his gun a little hunch. If that bullet'd went a half-inch deeper, you'd be up among the stars a bow-legged Wabash angel."

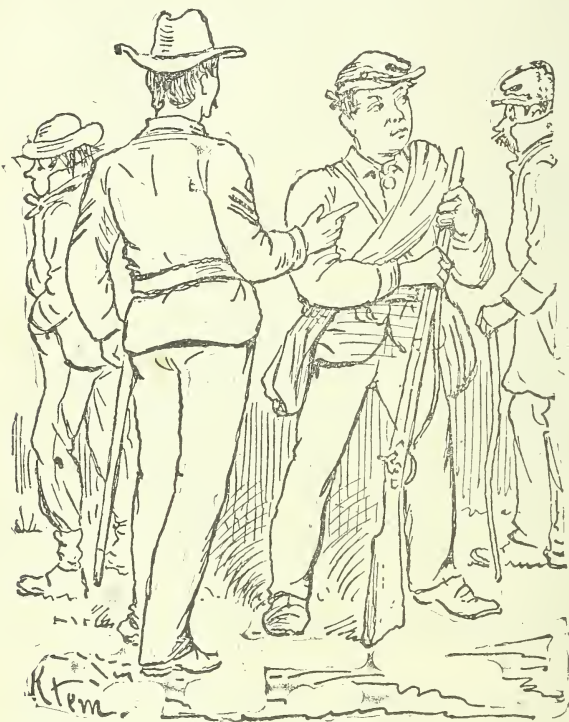
"Well, we've licked the stuffin' out of 'em at last, haven't we?" asked Si.

"Well, I should say we had," replied Shorty with an impressive whistle. "I thought the artillery would tear the foundations out of the whole State of Tennessee, the way it let into them. There won't be more crashin' an' bangin' when the world breaks up. I'd a-bin willin' to serve 100 years just to see that sight. Lord, what a chance the cannoneers had. First time I ever wanted to be in the artillery. The way they slung whole blacksmith shops over into them woods, an' smashed down trees, and wiped out whole brigades at a clip, filled my soul with joy."

"We must go over there in the mornin' an' take a look at the place," said Si drowsily. "It will be good to remember alongside o' the way they slapped it to us the first day."

Si and Shorty woke up the next morning to find the chill rain pouring down as if the country had been suffering from a year's drouth, and the rain was going to make up for it in one forenoon

"Lord have mercy," said the disgusted Shorty, as he fell into line for roll-call. "Another seepin', soppin', sloshin', spatterin' day. Only had 14 of 'em this week so far. Should think the geese 'd carry umbrellas, an' the cows wear overshoes in this land of eternal drizzle. If I ever get home they'll have to run me through a brick-kiln to dry me out."



SI REFUSES TO CALL UPON THE DOCTOR.

In spite of the down-pour the army was forming up rapidly to resume the advance upon Murfreesboro', and over the ground on the left, that had proved so disastrous to the rebels the day before.

While the 200th Ind. was getting ready to fall in, the

sick-call sounded, and the Orderly-Sergeant remarked to Si:

"Fall into this squad, Corporal Klegg."

"What for?" asked Si, looking askance at the squad.

"To go to the Surgeon's tent," answered the Orderly-Sergeant. "This is the sick squad."

"That's what I thought," answered Si, "an' that's the reason I aint goin' to join it."

"But your head's bigger'n a bushel, Si," remonstrated the Sergeant. "Better let the doctor see it."

"I don't want none of his bluemass or quinine," persisted Si. "That's all he ever gives for anything. The swellin' 'll come out o' my head in time, same as it does out o' other people's."

"Corporal, I'll excuse you from duty to-day," said the Captain kindly. "I really think you ought to go to the Surgeon."

"If you don't mind, Captain," said Si, saluting, "I'll stay with the boys. I want to see this thing to the end. My head won't hurt me half so bad as if I was back gruntin' 'round in the hospital."

"Probably you are right," said the Captain. "Come along, then."

Willing and brave as the men were, all the movements were tiresomely slow and laggard. The week of marching and lying unsheltered in the rain, of terrific fighting, and of awful anxiety had brought about mental and physical exhaustion. The men were utterly worn out in body and mind. This is usually the case in every great battle. Both sides struggle with all their mental and physical powers, until both are worn out. The one that can make just a little more effort than the other wins the victory. This was emphatically so in the battle of Stone River. The rebels had exhausted themselves,

even, more in their assaults than the Union men had in repelling them.

When, therefore, the long line of blue labored slowly through the mud and the drenching rain up the gentle slopes on the farther side of Stone River, the rebels suddenly gave ground before them. At last a point was reached which commanded a view of Murfreesboro' and the rebel position. The rebels were seen to be in retreat, and the exhausted Army of the Cumberland was mighty glad to have them go.

As soon as it was certain that the enemy was really abandoning the bitterly-contested field, an inexpressible weariness overwhelmed everybody. The 200th Ind. could scarcely drag one foot after another as it moved back to find a suitable camping-ground.

Si and Shorty crawled into a cedar thicket, broke down some brush for a bed, laid a pole in two crotches, leaned some brush against it to make a partial shelter, built a fire, and sat down.

"I declare, I never knew what being tuckered out was before," said Si. "And it's come on me all of a sudden. This morning I felt as if I could do great things, but the minute I found that them rebels was really going, my legs begun to sink under me."

"Same way with me," accorded Shorty. "Don't believe I've got strength enough left to pull a settin' hen offen her nest. But we can't be drowned out this way. We must fix up some better shelter."

"The Colonel says there's a wagon-load o' rations on the way here," said Si, sinking wearily down on the ground by the fire, and putting out his hands over the feeble blaze. "Let's wait till we git something to eat. Mebbe we'll feel more like work after we've eaten something."

"Si Klegg," said Shorty sternly, but settling down him-

self on the other side of the fire, "I never knowed you to flop down before. You've always bin, if anything, forwarder than me. I was in hopes now that you'd take me by the back o' the neck and try to shake some o' this laziness out o' me."

"Wait till the rations come," repeated Si, listlessly. "Mebbe we'll feel livelier then." The shelter we've fixed up'll keep out the coarsest o' the rain anyway. Most o' the boys ain't got none."

When the rations arrived, Si and Shorty had energy enough to draw, cook and devour an immense supper. Then they felt more tired than ever. Shorty had managed to tear off a big piece of the wagon cover while he was showing much zeal in getting the rations distributed quickly. He got the company's share in this, and helped carry it to the company, but never for a minute relaxed his hold on the coveted canvas. Then he took it back to his fire. Si and he spent what energy they had left in making a tolerable tent of it, by stretching it over their shelter. They tied it down carefully, to keep anybody else from stealing it off them, and Shorty took the additional precaution of fastening a strip of it around his neck. Then they crawled in, and before night come on they were sleeping apparently as soundly as the Seven of Ephesus.

CHAPTER XI.

GOING INTO WINTER QUARTERS.

The next day—Sunday—after the battle dawned as clear, bright and sparkling as only a Winter's day can dawn in Tennessee, after a fortnight of doleful deluges. Tennessee Winter weather is like the famous little girl with the curl right down the middle of her forehead, who,

“When she was good was very, very good,
And when she was bad was horrid.”

After weeks of heart-saddening down-pour that threatens to drench life and hope out of every breathing thing, it will suddenly beam out in a day so crisp and bright that all Nature will wear a gladsome smile and life become jocund.

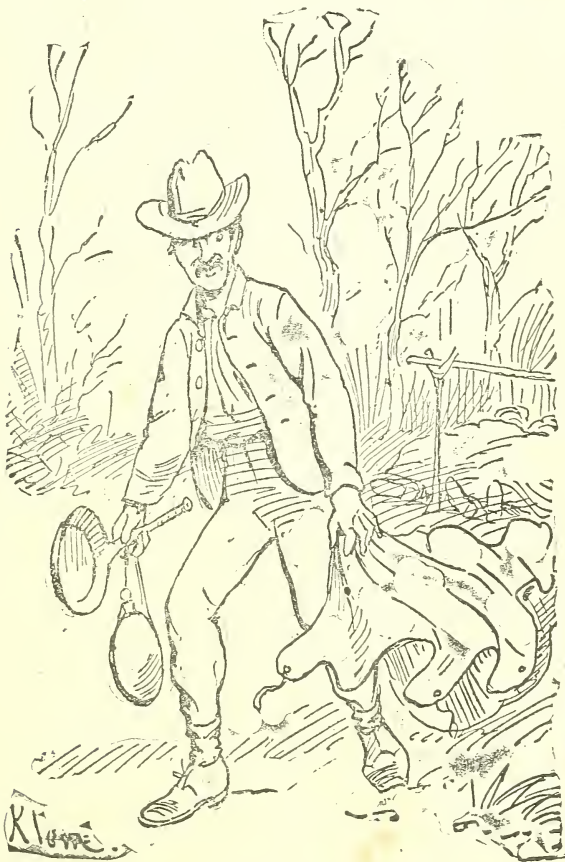
When the reveille and the Orderly-Sergeant's brogans aroused Si and Shorty the latter's first thought was for the strip of canvas which he had secured with so much trouble from the wagon-cover, and intended to cherish for future emergencies. He felt his neck and found the strip that he had tied there, but that was all that there was of it. A sharp knife had cut away the rest so deftly that he had not felt its loss.

[Shorty's boiler got very hot at once, and he began blowing off steam. Somehow he had taken an especial fancy to that piece of canvas, and his wrath was hot against the man who had stolen it.

“Condemn that ornery thief,” he yelled. “He ought to be drummed out o' camp, with his head shaved. A man that'll steal ought to be hunted down and kicked out o' the army. He's not fit to associate with decent men.”

Why, Shorty," said Si, amused at his partner's heat, "you stole that yourself."

"I didn't do nuthin' o' the kind," snorted Shorty, "and I don't want you sayin' so, Mr. Klegg, if you don't want



SHORTY RETALIATES.

to git into trouble. I took it from a teamster. You ought to know it's never stealin' to take anything from a teamster. I'll bet it was some of that Toledo regiment that stole it. Them Maumee River muskrats are the durndest

thieves in the brigade. They'd steal the salt out o' your hardtack if you didn't watch 'em—not because they wanted the salt, but just because they can't help stealin'. They ought to be fired out o' the brigade. I'm going over to their camp to look for it, and if I find it I'll wipe the ground up with the feller that took it. 'Taint so much the value of the thing as the principle. I hate a thief above all things."

Si tried to calm Shorty and dissuade him from going, but his partner was determined, and Si let him go, but kept an eye and ear open for developments.

In a few minutes Shorty returned, with jubilation in his face, the canvas in one hand and a nice frying-pan and a canteen of molasses in the other.

"Just as I told you," he said triumphantly. "It was some o' them Maumee River muskrats. I found them asleep in a bunch o' cedars, with our nice tent stretched over their thievin' carcasses. They'd been out on guard or scoutin', and come in after we'd gone to sleep. They were still snorin' away when I yanked the tent off, an' picked up their fryin'-pan an' canteen o' molasses to remember 'em by."

"I thought you hated a thief," Si started to say; but real comrades soon learn, like husband and wife, that it is not necessary to say everything that rises to their lips. Besides, the frying-pan was a beauty, and just what they wanted.

It became generally understood during the day that the Army of the Cumberland would remain around Murfreesboro indefinitely—probably until Spring—to rest, refit and prepare for another campaign. Instructions were given to regimental commanders to select good camping ground and have their men erect comfortable Winter quarters.

The 200th Ind. moved into an oak grove, on a gentle

slope toward the south, and set about making itself thoroughly at home.

Si and Shorty were prompt to improve the opportunity to house themselves comfortably.

Si had now been long enough in the army to regard everything that was not held down by a man with a gun and bayonet as legitimate capture. He passed where one of the Pioneer Corps had laid down his ax for a minute to help on some other work. That minute was spent by Si in walking away with the ax hidden under his long overcoat. Those long overcoats, like charity, covered a multitude of sins.

The ax was not sharp—no army ax ever was, but Si's and Shorty's muscles were vigorous enough to make up for its dullness. In a little while they had cut down and trimmed enough oak saplings to make a pen about the size of the corn-crib at Si's home. While one would whack away with the ax the other would carry the poles and build up the pen. By evening they had got this higher than their heads, and had to stop work from sheer exhaustion.

"I'll declare," said Si, as they sat down to eat supper and survey their work, "if father'd ever made me do half as much work in one day as I have done to-day I should have died with tiredness and then run away from home. It does seem to me that every day we try a new way o' killing ourselves."

"Well," said Shorty, arresting a liberal chunk of fried pork on the way to his capacious grinders to cast an admiring glance on the structure, "it's worth it all. It'll just be the daisiest shebang in Tennessee when we git it finished. I'm only afraid we'll make it so fine that Gen. Rosecrans or the Governor of Tennessee 'll come down and take it away for himself. That'd just be our luck."

"Great Scott!" said Si, looking at it with a groan. "How

much work there is to do yet. What are we goin' to do for a roof? Then, we must cut out a place for a door. We'll have to chink between all the logs with mud and chunks; and we ought to have a fireplace."

"I've bin thinkin' of all them things, and I've thunk 'em out," said Shorty cheerfully. "I've bin thinkin' while you've bin workin'. Do you know, I believe I was born for an architect, an' I'll go into the architect business after the war! I've got a head plumb full of the natural stuff for the business. It growed right there. All I need is some more know-how as to figgers an' makin' plans on paper."

"O, you've got a great big head, Shorty," said Si, admiringly, "and whatever you start to do you do splendidly. Nobody knows that better'n me. But what's your idee about the roof?"

"Why, do you see that there freight-car over there by the bridge," (pointing to where a car was off the track, near Stone River.) "I've bin watchin' that ever since we begun buildin', for fear somebody else'd drop on to it. The roof of that car is tin. We'll jest slip down there with the ax after dark, an' cut off enough to make a splendid roof. I always wanted a tin-roofed house. Ole Jake Wilson, who lives near us, had a tin roof on his barn, an' it made his daughters so proud they wouldn't go home with me from meetin'. You kin write home that we have a new house with a tin roof, an' it'll help your sisters to marry better."

"Shorty, that head o' your'n gits bigger every time I look at it."

Si and Shorty had the extreme quality of being able to forget fatigue when there was something to be accomplished. As darkness settled down they picked up the ax and proceeded across the fields to the freight-car.

"There's someone in there," said Si, as they came close

to it. They reconnoitered it carefully. Five or six men, without arms, were comfortably ensconced inside and playing cards by the light of a fire of pitch-pine, which they had built upon some dirt placed in the middle of the car.

"They're blamed skulkers," said Shorty, after a minute's survey of the interior. "Don't you see they haint got their guns with 'em? We won't mind 'em."

They climbed on top of the car, measured off about half of it, and began cutting through the tin with the ax. The noise alarmed the men inside. They jumped out on the ground, and called up:

"Here, what're you fellers doin' up there? This is our car. Let it alone."

"Go to the devil," said Shorty, making another slash at the roof with the ax.

"This is our car, I tell you," reiterated the men. "You let it alone, or we'll make you." Some of the men looked around for something to throw at them.

Si walked to the end of the car, tore off the brake-wheel, and came back.

"You fellers down there shut up and go back inside to your cards, if you know what's good for you," he said. "You're nothing but a lot of durned skulkers. We are here under orders. We don't want nothin' but a piece o' the tin roof. You kin have the rest. If any of you attempts to throw anything I'll mash him into the ground with this wheel. Do you hear me? Go back inside, or we'll arrest the whole lot of you and take you back to your regiments."

Si's authoritative tone, and the red stripes on his arm, were too much for the guilty consciences of the skulkers, and they went back inside the car. The tearing off the roof proceeded without further interruption, but with considerable mangling of their hands by the edges of the tin.

After they had gotten it off, they proceeded to roll it up and started back for their "house." It was a fearful load, and one that they would not have attempted to carry in ordinary times. But their blood was up, they were determined to outshine everybody else with their tin roof, and they toiled on over the mud and rough ground, although every little while one of them would make a misstep and both would fall, and the heavy weight would seem to mash them into the ground.

"I don't wonder old Jake Wilson was proud of his tin roof," gasped Si, as he pulled himself out of a mudhole and rolled the tin off him and Shorty. "If I'd a tin roof on my barn durned if my daughter should walk home with a man that didn't own a whole section of bottom land and drove o' mules to boot."

It was fully midnight before they reached their pen and laid their burden down. They were too tired to do anything more than lay their blankets down on a pile of cedar boughs and go to sleep.

The next morning they unrolled their booty and gloated over it. It would make a perfect roof, and they felt it repaid all their toils. Upon measurement they found it much larger each way than their log pen.

"Just right," said Shorty gleefully. "It'll stick out two feet all around. It's the aristocratic, fashionable thing now-a-days to have wide cornishes. Remember them swell houses we wuz lookin' at in Louisville? We're right in style with them."

The rest of Co. Q gathered around to inspect it and envy them.

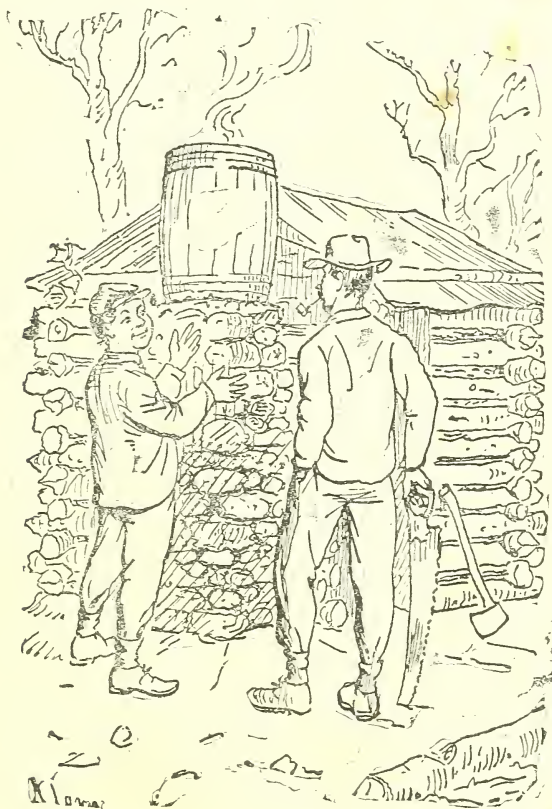
"I suppose you left some," said Jack Wilkinson. "I'll go down there and get the rest."

"Much you won't," said Si, looking toward the car; "there ain't no rest."

They all looked that way. Early as it was the car had

totally disappeared, down to the wheels, which some men were rolling away.

"That must be some o' them Maumee River muskrats," said Shorty, looking at the latter. "They'll steal any-



THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL.

thing they kin git away with, just for the sake of stealin'. What on earth kin they do with them wheels?"

"They may knock 'em off the axles an' make hearths for their fireplaces, and use the axles for posts," suggested Si.

"Here, you fellers," said Shorty, "give us a lift. Let's have a house-raisin'. Help us put the roof on."

They fell to with a will, even the Captain assisting, and, after a good deal of trouble and more cut hands, succeeded in getting the piece of tin on top of the pen and bent down across the ridge-pole. Si and Shorty proceeded to secure it in place by putting other poles across it and fastening them down with ropes and strips of bark to the lower logs.

"Your broad cornice is aristocratic, as you say," said the Captain, "but I'm afraid it'll catch the wind, and tip your house over in some big storm."

"That's so," admitted Shorty; "but a feller that puts on airs always has to take some chances. I don't want people to think that we are mean and stingy about a little tin, so I guess we'll keep her just as she is."

The next day they borrowed a saw from the Pioneers, cut out a hole for the door, and another for the fireplace. They made a frame for the door out of pieces of cracker-boxes, and hung up their bit of canvas for a door. They filled up the spaces between the logs with pieces of wood, and then daubed clay on until they had the walls tight. They gathered up stones and built a commodious fireplace, daubing it all over with clay, until it was wind and water-tight.

What are we goin' to do for a chimney, Si?" said Shorty, as their fireplace became about breast-high. "Build one o' sticks, like these rebels around here? That'll be an awful lot o' work."

"I've had an idee," said Si. "I aint goin' to let you do all the thinkin', even if you are a born architect. When I was helpin' draw rations yesterday, I looked at the pork barrels, and got an idee that one of them'd make a good chimney. I spoke to Bill Suggs, the Commissary-Sergeant, about it, and he agreed to save me a barrel .

when it was empty, which it must be about now. I'll go down and see him about it."

Si presently came back rolling the empty barrel. They knocked the bottom out, carefully plastered it over in-



SOLID COMFORT.

side with clay, and set it up on their fireplace, and made the joints with more clay. It made a splendid chimney. They washed the clay off their hands, built a cheerful fire inside, cooked a bountiful supper, and ate it in the

light and comfort of their own fireside. It was now Saturday night. They had had a week of severer toil than they had ever dreamed of performing at home, but its reward was ample.

"Ah," said Shorty, as he sat on a chunk of wood, pipe in mouth, and absorbed the warmth, "this is something like home and home comforts. It's more like white livin' than I've had since I've bin in the army. Let's act like men and Christians to-morrow, by not doin' a lick o' work o' any kind. Let's lay abed late, and then wash up all over, and go to hear the Chaplain preach."

"Agreed," said Si, as he spread out their blankets for the night.

It had been threatening weather all day, and now the rain came down with a rush

"Isn't that music, now," said Shorty, listening to the patter on the roof. "Nothin' sounds so sweet as rain upon a tin roof. Let it rain cats and dogs, if it wants to. The harder the better. Si, there's nothin' so healthy to sleep under as a tin roof. I'll never have anything but a tin roof on my house when I git home. And we've got the only tin roof in the regiment. Think o' that."

But Si was too sleepy to even think.

CHAPTER XII.

SI AND SHORTY MAKE ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THEIR RESIDENCE.

Si and Shorty kept Sunday as planned. They really did not know how tired they were until they formed the resolution to give the day to absolute restfulness. Then every joint and muscle ached from the arduous toil of the past week, added to the strains and hardships of the week of battle.

"Used to seem to me," said Shorty, "that when Sunday come after the first week's plowin' in Spring that I had a bile in every limb. Now I appear to have one in every j'int, and in my brains as well. I didn't ever suppose that I could be so tired, and yit be able to set up and take nourishment."

"Same here," said Si. "Feel as if I ought to be wrapped in cotton battin' an' sweet oil, an' laid away for awhile."

The only thing about them which did not show deadly lassitude was their appetites. Fortunately, the Commissary took a liberal view of the Regulations as to rations, issuing enough to make up for those they had not drawn during the times when his department was not in working order. They ate all these and wanted more.

The Quartermaster had also succeeded in re-establishing relations. They drew from him new underclothing to replace that which they had lost, took a thorough wash—the first good one they had had since Christmas morning—beat and brushed much of the accumulated mud—representing every variety of soil between Murfreesboro and Nashville—out of their clothes, cleaned and

greased their heavy brogans, and went with their comrades to divine service, feeling that they had made every provision required for a proper observance of the holy day



AT THE SUNDAY SERVICE IN CAMP.

Si had a really fine baritone voice, and led the meeting in singing:

"Am I a soldier of the cross?"

After church Shorty said:

"Si, when you were singing so loud about being a sol-

dier of the cross and a follower of the Lamb I wanted to git right up and tell you that you'd have to git a transfer from the 200th Ind. We've lots of cross soldiers, especially on mud marches, but we don't want any soldiers in this regiment except for the Constitution of the United States and the laws made in pursuance thereof, against all enemies and opposers whatsoever, either foreign or domestic. An' as for follerin' the lamb, you know as well as I do the orders agin foragin'."

"O, dry up, Shorty. I don't believe going to church done you a mite o' good. I tell you it done me lots."

"There you're mistaken," answered Shorty. "It just done me lots o' good. Kind o' restored communications with home and respectable folks once more, an' made me think I still belonged to what the jographies call civilized and partially-civilized people, something that we seem in great danger o' forgettin', the way we've bin goin' on."

The good Chaplain's fervent appeals to devote the day to earnest consideration of their souls' welfare could not keep them from spending the hours in planning and discussing further improvements on the house.

"We must have a real door," said Shorty, looking critically at the strip of canvas that did duty for that important adjunct. "Muslin looks shiftless, an', besides, I think it's unhealthy. Lets in drafts, an' will give us colds."

"Too bad about our ketchin' cold," said Si sardonically. "Most o' the time lately we've bin sleepin' out with nothin' around us but the State line o' Tennessee."

"Don't be too flip, young man," said Shorty severely. "You have not had a home with its blessin's long enough to appreciate it. I say we must have a real door an' a winder that'll let in light, an' a bedstead, an' a floor o' planks."

"We ought to have 'em, certainly," agreed Si. "But must have 'em is quite another thing. How are we goin' to git 'em. There's 40,000 men around here, snatchin' at every piece o' plank as big as your hand."

"Well," retorted Shorty, "we're goin' to have a real door, a winder, and a plank floor, all the same. They're to be had somewhere in this country, an' they'll have to run mighty hard to git away from us."

The next morning the Orderly-Sergeant said:

"Corp'l Klegg, you'll take five men, go down to the railroad, and report to the Commissary to load the wagon with rations."

Si took Shorty and four others and started off on this errand. He was soon so busy rolling heavy pork barrels from the car into the wagon that he failed to notice that Shorty was not with him. Finally they got the wagon loaded and started, with them walking alongside, puffing and sweating from their vigorous labor.

They were not 100 yards away from the train, when the Conductor came storming up:

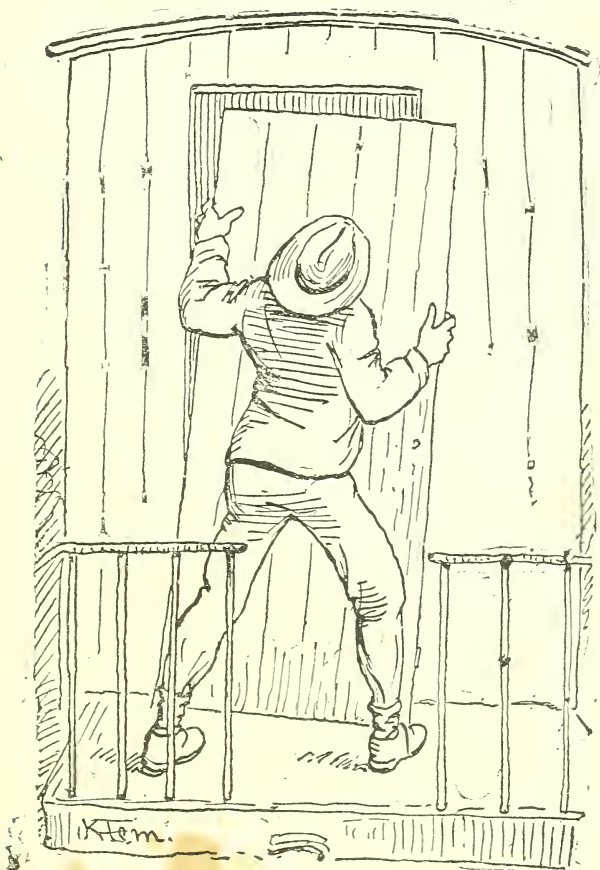
"See here, Lieutenant," he said to the Commissary, "some o' them men o' yours sneaked around and stole the hind door off my caboose while you was loading up."

"I don't believe a word of it," said the Commissary, firing up at once. "Mine ain't that kind of men. I'd have you know they don't steal. What reason have you for saying so?"

"The door was on the car when I came out to meet you, and now it's gone, and there's been nobody near the caboose but your men."

"I know my men were working hard all the time right under my eyes," said the Lieutenant, growing angrier every minute. "They're not the men to steal anything, and if they were they didn't have any chance. They were too busy. You can satisfy yourself that they didn't."

You see none of them have the door with them, and you can search the wagon. Get right in there and look for it.'



SHORTY CONFISCATES THE CABOOSE DOOR.

The Conductor climbed into the wagon and looked carefully through.

"No, it's not there," he said ruefully.

Then the Commissary's wrath flamed out. "There, confound you, you are at it again, you infernal civilian,

slandering and abusing men who are fighting for their country. Charging them with stealing your old caboose door. Think of your disgraceful impudence, villifying men who are shedding their blood for their country by such shameless charges. What'd they want with your old car door? Get away from here, before I lose my temper and do you damage."

The Conductor walked away muttering:

"Blasted thieving whelps o' soldiers, what'll they steal next? Lost all my train tools at Lavergne, swiped the bedding at Smyrna, got away with our clothes and dishes at Antioch, stole stove and lanterns at Overall's Crick, and now they've begun on the cars. I'll be lucky to have enough wheels left on the engine to run her back to Nashville."

The Commissary continued to fume about the disgraceful charges brought against his men until they reached camp. The wagon was unloaded and the squad dismissed.

As Si came up to the "house" he saw Shorty busily engaged in hanging the caboose door by means of hinges which he had improvised from some boot-tops.

"Why, Shorty," gasped Si, "how did you git away with it?"

"Easy enough," answered his partner. "I saw you fellers gittin' very busy over them pork barrels, an' all the train hands helpin' you. I meandered back to the caboose, gently lifted the back door offen its hinges, slipped down into the weeds in the ditch an' kept under cover o' them till I was out o' sight. Say, isn't it just a bully door?"

That afternoon Si and Shorty walked over to where a detail of men were at work building a bridge across Stone River, under the direction of a Lieutenant of Pioneers. They had an idea that an opportunity might occur there

to pick up something that would add to their home comforts. The Lieutenant was bustling about, hurrying the completion of the work before night. As the detail was made up of squads from various regiments, he was not acquainted with the men, and had much difficulty in assigning them to the work that would suit them best. He came up to Si, who still wore the artillery Sergeant's overcoat he had picked up during the battle, and said sharply:

"Here, Sergeant, don't stand around doing nothing. Set the men a good example by pitching in lively. There's plenty to do for everybody. If you can't find anything else, help dig down that bank, and roll those big stones into the fill. Hold on; I've thought of something else. I want a reliable man to send over for some lumber. Put one of your men on that wagon there, and go with him, and take this letter to Capt. Billings, over at the saw-mill. It's a requisition for a load of lumber. Avoid the camps as much as possible on your way back, or they'll steal every inch away from you."

"Very good, sir," said Si, saluting. "Shorty, jump on the wagon there, and gether up the lines."

Shorty very obediently took his place on the seat of the two-horse wagon employed by the Pioneers for their jobs.

"Hurry up," enjoined the Lieutenant; "we need those boards at once."

"Very good, sir," replied Si, saluting.

"This is what I call a puddin', said Shorty, oracularly, as they drove away. "The Lord always kin be trusted to help the deservin', if the deservin' only keep their eyes peeled for His p'inters. This comes from not workin' yesterday and goin' to church."

They drove down to the sawmill, delivered their requisition, and had their wagon loaded with newly-sawn

plank. The Captain had the planks carefully counted, the number and feet entered upon his record, and set forth upon the return which he gave Si to be delivered to the Lieutenant of Pioneers.

"Too dod-gasted much bookkeepin' in this army," remarked Si, rather disconsolately, and he put the paper in his blouse pocket, and they drove away. "Wastes entirely too much valuable time. What'd he count them boards for? Looked like he suspicioned us. How are we going to git away with any o' them?"

"I wouldn't have that man's suspicious mind for anything," answered Shorty. "He don't trust nobody. All the same, we're goin' to have enough boards for our floor."

"How are we goin' to manage it?" asked Si.

"Lots o' ways. There's no need o' your carryin' that paper back to the Lootenant. I might pick up several hundred feet and sneak away without your knowin' it. Say"—as a bright idea struck him—"what's the use o' goin' back to the Lootenant at all? Neither of us belongs to his detail. He don't know us from a side o' sole-leather. What's the matter with drivin' the wagon right up to camp, and swipin' the whole business, horses, wagon and all?"

"I haint been in the army as long as you have, Shorty, said Si doubtfully. "I've made some progress in petty larceny, as you know, but I aint yit quite up to stealin' a span o' horses and a wagon. Mebbe I'll come to it in time, but I aint quite ready for it now."

"That comes from goin' to church yesterday, and hearin' the Chaplain read the Ten Commandments," said Shorty wrathfully. "I don't believe they ought to allow the Chaplains to read them things. They aint suited to army life, and there ought to be a general order that they're prejudicial to good order and military disci-

pline. Where'd the army be if they obeyed that one about not covetin' a horse or other movable property? I tell you what we'll do, since your so milky on the thing: We'll drive up in front of our house, unload enough boards for our floor, you git out your gun and bayonet, and stand guard over 'em, and I'll drive the wagon down near the bridge, and jump off and leave it."

"All right," said Si; "that'll do splendidly, if you think you kin dodge the Lieutenant."

"O, he be darned," said Shorty scornfully. "I could git away from him if I wasn't 10 years old."

They carried out the plan. They drove up in front of their residence, and threw off a liberal quantity of the boards. The other boys raised a yell, and made a break for them. But Si ran inside, got his gun and established himself on guard.

"Don't you budge an inch from there till I git back," shouted Shorty, as he drove away. "Don't let one of Co. Q lay a finger on them. They're the durnedest thieves outside the Jeffersonville Penitentiary. You can't trust one o' them farther than you could sling a bull by the tail. I'll be back soon."

Shorty drove gaily down until he got close to the bridge. The Lieutenant had been impatiently expecting him, and as soon as the wagon came up it was surrounded by a crowd of men to unload it. The Lieutenant looked over the load.

"I wonder if he sent enough. Let me see your return," he said, looking up at the seat, where he expected to find the Sergeant he had put in charge. But the seat was empty. Shorty had jumped down, prudently mingled with the crowd, avoided the Lieutenant's eye with much more than his usual diffidence, and was modestly making his way back to camp behind a thicket of hazel bushes. When he got back to the house he was de-

lighted to find Si still master of the situation, with all the boards present and accounted for. They quickly transferred them to the interior, and found that they had enough for a nice floor, besides a couple of extra ones, to cut up into a table and stools.



SI DEFENDED THE PLUNDER.

"You done good work in keepin' the other boys offen 'em, Si," said he. "I was afraid you wouldn't. The only thing I've got agin Co. Q is that the boys will steal. Otherwise they're the nicest kind o' boys."

A couple of days later they got a pass to go down to Murfreesboro and look the sleepy old town over. They were particularly interested in the quaint old courthouse,

which had once been the capitol of Tennessee. They happened into one of the offices, which was entirely deserted. On the wall hung a steel engraving of Jeff Davis in a large oak frame.

"That blamed old rebel picture oughtn't to be hangin' there, Si," observed Shorty.

"Indeed it oughtn't. Jeff ought to be hung to a sour-apple tree, and that glass'd make a nice winder for our house."

"Indeed it would," Shorty started to answer, but time was too precious to waste in speech. In an instant he had shoved an old desk up to the wall, mounted it and handed the picture down to Si. They wrapped it up in their overcoats, and started back for camp. They had seen enough of Murfreesboro' for that day.

CHAPTER XIII.

SI AND SHORTY CHRISTEN THEIR PLACE "HOOSIER'S REST,"
AND GIVE A HOUSE-WARMING.

With a tin roof, a real door, a glazed window and a plank floor, Si and Shorty's house was by far the most aristocratic in the cantonment of the 200th Ind., if not in the entire Winter quarters of the Army of the Cumberland. A marble mansion, with all the modern improvements, could not more proudly overshadow all its neighbors than it did.

Even the Colonel's was no comparison to it. A tent-fly had been made to do duty for a roof at the Colonel's. It could not be stretched evenly and tight. It would persistently sag down in spots, and each of these spots became a reservoir from which would descend an icy stream. A blanket had to serve as a door, and the best substitute for window glass were Commissary blanks greased with fat from headquarters frying-pan. The floor, instead of being of clean, new plank, as Si's and Shorty's, was made of the warped and weather-beaten boards of a stable, which had been torn down by a fatigue detail.

Si and Shorty took as much pride and pleasure in their architecture as any nabob over his million-dollar villa. They were constantly on the alert for anything that would add to the comfort and luxury of their home. In their wanderings they chanced to come across an old-fashioned bedstead in an outhouse. It was of the kind in which the rails screw together, and the bed is held up by a strong cord crossing and recrossing from one rail to another. This looked like real luxury, and they at once appropriated it without any consultation with the owner, whoever he may have been.

"It'd be a waste o' time, anyhow," remarked Shorty. "He's a rebel, and probably over there in Bragg's army."

They made a tick out of the piece of wagon-cover, filled it with beech leaves, and had a bed which surpassed their most extravagant ideas of comfort in the army.

"Shorty," said Si, as they snuggled themselves in the first night, "this seems almost too much. Do you ever remember settin' the whole night on a rail, with nothin' over us but clouds leakin' ice-water?"

"Shut up," said Shorty, giving him a kick under the blankets. "Do you want me to have a nightmare?"

They got a number of flat stones, and laid down a little pavement in front of their door, and drove an old bayonet into the logs to serve as a scraper. They rigorously insisted on every visitor using this before entering.

"For common Wabash-bottom fly-up-the-cricks and private soljers, you're puttin' on entirely too many frills," said Sol Murbury, the Wagonmaster, angrily, as it was firmly insisted upon that he stay outside until he carefully cleaned his shoes on the bayonet. "A man that's afraid o' mud haint no business in the army. He orter stay at home an' wear Congress gaiters an' pantalets. You're puttin' on entirely too many scollops, I tell you. You knowed all 'bout mud in the Wabash bottoms. You had 'nuff of it there, the Lord knows."

"Yes, we had," replied Shorty; "but we was too well raised to track any of it into anybody's parlor."

"Parlor," echoed Sol, with a horse-laugh. "Lord, how fine we are, just bekaze one o' us happens to be a measly little Corporal. In some armies the Wagonmasters have Corporals to wait on 'em, an' black their boots. Now, I'll tell yo' what I've come for. I've lost my scoop-shovel, an' I've bin told that you fellers stole it, an' are usin' it to bake hoe-cakes on. I've come up here to see

if you've got it, an' I'm goin' right in there to see for myself, mud or no mud."

"We hain't got your blamed old scoop-shovel; you can't git it; you ain't goin' in there until you clean your feet, an' not then onless we conclude to allow you," Shorty replied.

"I'm goin' in there, or break some Wabash loon's neck," said the Wagonmaster wrathfully.

"I always did like to get a chance to lick a mule-whacker," said Si, pulling off his overcoat. "And the bigger and the more consequential he is, the better. I've never licked a Wagonmaster yit, an' I'm just achin' for a chance."

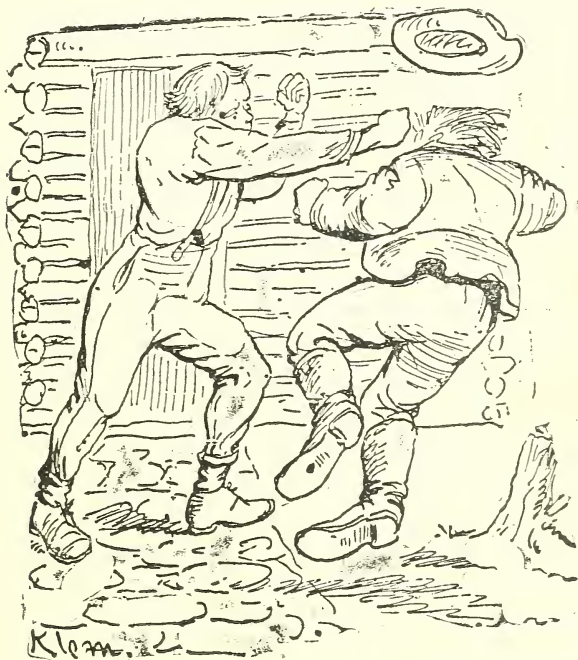
The Wagonmaster was the bully of the regiment, as Wagonmasters generally are. When Si came into the regiment, a green cub, just getting his growth, and afraid of everybody who assumed a little authority and had more knowledge of the world than he, the Wagonmaster had been very overbearing, and at times abusive. That is the way of Wagonmasters and their ilk. The remembrance of this rankled in Si's mind.

On the other hand, the Wagonmaster failed to comprehend the change that a few months of such service as the 200th Ind.'s wrought in verdant, bashful boys like Si. He thought he could cow him as easily as he did when Si had timidly ventured to ask His Greatness a modest question or two as they were crossing the Ohio River. Wagonmasters were always making just that kind of mistakes.

The other boys ran up to see the fun. The Wagonmaster made a rush at Si with doubled fists, but Si quickly stepped to one side, and gave the hulking fellow a tap on the butt of his ear that laid him over in the mud. The other boys yelled with delight. Next to a

Sutler, or a conceited, fresh young Aid, the soldiers always delighted to see a Wagonmaster get into trouble.

The Wagonmaster sprang up, ready for another round; but the boys raised the cry that the Officer of the Day was coming, and both Si and the Wagonmaster remembered that they had business in other parts of the camp.



SI FLOORS THE WAGONMASTER.

The next day Shorty said: "It's all right, Si; we could've kept that scoop-shovel as long as we wanted to, but I thought that for many reasons it'd better be got out of the regiment, so I've traded it to them Maumee Muskrats for a Dutch oven they'd borrowed from their Major."

"Bully," answered Si. "I'd much rather have the Dutch oven anyway."

Si produced a piece of board, which had been painted white, and evidently done duty as part of the door of a house in Murfreesboro', looked at it critically, and then selected a piece of charcoal from the fire, and sat down with an air of studious purpose.

"What are you up to now, Si?" asked Shorty curiously.

"Why," explained Si, "I've noticed, whenever we've bin in any big place, that all the fine houses have signs or numbers, or something else onto 'em, to name 'em. I've bin thinkin' o' something for our house. How does 'Hoosier's Rest' strike you for a name?"

"Splendid," said Shorty. "Couldn't be better."

"And," continued Si, "I've got this board to make a sign to nail up over the door. Do you know how to spell Hoosier, Shorty?"

"Blest if I do," answered Shorty. "It wasn't in our book. At least, we never got to it, if it was. You see, our spellin'-school broke up just as we got to 'incompatible.' The teacher got too fond o' Nancy Billings, that I was castin' sheep's eyes at myself. He got to givin' her easy words, to keep her at the head o' the class, and pickin' hard ones for me, to send me to the foot, where I'd be fur away from her. I wouldn't stand it always, so me an' him had it out one night before all the scholars; I got away with him, and he left the country, and busted up the school."

"Hoosier," repeated Si to himself. "I never saw it spelled. But there must be some way to spell it. Let me see: W-h-o spells 'who.'"

"That's so," assented Shorty.

"I-s spells 'is,'" continued Si. "Who-is—that's right so far. H-e-r-e spells 'here.' 'Who-is-here?' That seems almost right, don't it, Shorty?"

"It certainly does," replied Shorty, scratching his head to accelerate his mental action. "Or it might be, Si,

w-h-o, who; i-s, is; and y-e-r, yer. You know some ignorant folks say yer for you. And they say the name came from the people who first settled in Injianny sayin' 'Who's yer?' to any new-comer."

"I believe you're right, Shorty," said Si, bending over the board with the charcoal to begin the work. "We'll make it that way, anyway."

The next day passers-by saw a white board nailed up over the door, which contained a charcoal sketch of a soldier seated on a chunk of wood, with a pipe in his mouth, taking as much ease as Si could throw into the outlines of his face and body, and with it was this legend:

"WHO IS. YER'S REST."

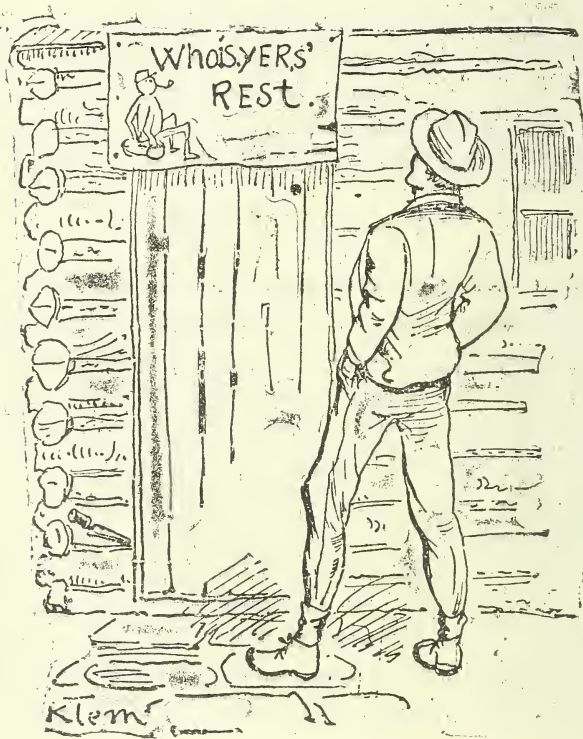
The next idea that came into the partners' minds was that the requirements of society demanded that they give a housewarming in their sumptuous abode. They at once set about making it a memorable social event.

While out with a wagon after forage they found an Indiana man who had settled in that country. He had a good orchard. They bought from him a barrel of pretty hard cider and several bushels of apples. His wife knew how to make fried doughnuts of the real Indiana indigestibility. They would be luxuries for the boys, and a half-bushel were contracted for. The farmer was to bring them all in his wagon, and Si and Shorty were to meet him at the pickets and guard the treasures to their abode.

They bought a little bale of fragrant Kinnikinnick tobacco from the sutler, made a sufficiency of corn-cob pipes; swept off the ground in front of their house, which, as there had been no rain for several days, was in good condition, with brooms of brush, that it might serve for a dancing-floor, gathered in a stock of pitch-pine knots for

their fire, spoke to Bunty Jim to bring his fiddle along, and to Uncle Sassafra, the Colonel's cook, to come down with his banjo, and their preparations were completed.

It was a crisp, delightful Winter evening, with the moon at full, the fire burning brightly, and everybody in the best of spirits. The awful week of marching, enduring



"HOOSIER'S REST."

and suffering; of terrific fighting, limitless bloodshed; of wounds and death to one out of every four men in the ranks; of nerve-cracking anxieties to all night as well have been centuries ago, for any sign that appeared on the bright, animated faces of the young men who gathered

in front of the cabin. They smoked, danced old-fashioned country dances to the music of the fiddle and the banjo, and sang songs which lamented the death of "Lily Dale," mourned that "My Nelly was sleeping in the Hazel Dell," adjured the "Silver Moon" to "roll on," and so on through the whole repertoire of the sentimental ballads of that day.

Then they were invited into the house to inspect its complete, luxurious appointments, and feast themselves to bursting on apples, hard cider, and doughnuts that would have tried any stomach but a young soldier's.

Billy Gurney, who had been back to Nashville as one of the guard to a train-load of wounded, was induced to favor the company with the newest song, which had just reached that city. He cleared his throat with another tincupful of cider, and started off with:

"When this cruel war is over."

Rapturous applause followed the first verse, and Billy started in to teach them the chorus, so they could all join.

A loud explosion came from the fireplace, a camp-kettle full of cider that was being mulled by the fire was splattered over the company, scalding some of them severely; stones from the fireplace and bullets flew about the room. They all rushed out. Footsteps could be heard running in the distance. They looked in that direction, and recognized Sol Murbury's broad back and bushy head.

"That blamed Wagonmaster dropped a nosebag with a lot o' cartridges in it down the chimbley," said Shorty, who had made an inspection of the fireplace. "Mad because he wasn't invited. You bet, I'll salivate him well for that little trick."

CHAPTER XIV.

SIS FATHER COMES DOWN TO THE CAMP OF THE 200TH IND.
ON AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

"Mother," said Mr. Josiah Klegg, sr., suddenly laying down the County paper, and beginning to polish his spectacles with his red bandanna, "do you know what I've the greatest mind in the world to do?"

It was an evening in February, 1863, and the family had been sitting for some hours after supper around the bright fire, engaged in various occupations.

"No, father," said Mrs. Klegg, looking up from her knitting with such interest that she dropped several stitches. The girls stopped their sewing, and turned expectant eyes on their father. When Mr. Josiah Klegg, sr., announced that he had a great mind to do anything, that thing stood in imminent danger of being done. He was not given to visionary schemes, still less to idle speech. He thought slowly and doggedly, but when he had arrived at a conclusion there were 200 pounds of solid, stubborn, unchangeable Indiana farmer behind the conclusion.

"What is it, father?" asked Mrs. Klegg, making an automatic effort to gather up her lost stitches.

"I've a good mind to go down to Murfreesboro and see Si," responded the father.

"Why, father!" gasped the three "wimmen folks."

"Go down there among them gorillas?" ejaculated Mrs. Klegg.

"And John Morgan raiders," echoed Maria.

"And Secesh soljers, butternut brigands, rebel rascals," added Tilda

"Well," answered Mr. Klegg, deliberately, "they've been peggin' away at Si for a good many months now, and they haven't killed him by a jug full. Guess I kin stand 'em for a few days. The papers say that the army's settled down at Murfreesboro for the Winter, and that the railroad's runnin' all right from Looyiville clean there. I kin do nothin' 'round the farm for the next three or four weeks, till Spring opens, except the chores about the house, which little Jimmie Watkins kin tend to as well as I kin. I've got all my fences in good shape, and split all the rails I need. There's wood enough cut to last the Winter out. I've hauled all the wheat to town I'm goin' to till prices go higher. I finished gittin' out my clover seed yesterday, and now there's nothin' left for a month but to do boy's work round the house, or talk politics down at the store. I'd rather go down and see Si."

"Why, father," remonstrated Mrs. Klegg, "how kin you ever git along in them camps, and live the way them soljers do?"

"You forgit," said her husband, with a touch of dignity, "that I druv team for a whole week in the Black Hawk war. I wanted to enlist, but I was too young. Then I turned out and drilled with the militia as long as there was any musters. I know a good deal more about war than you think."

"How do you s'pose you'll ever find Si in all that ruck o' men?" said Mrs. Klegg doubtfully.

"O, they all know Si by this time," returned the father confidently. "Besides, he's an officer now. I'll go right to Gen. Rosecrans's Headquarters. He's probably right near him, where he kin have him at any time. But don't write to Si that I'm comin'. I want to surprise him."

As soon as it was seen that the father was deter-

mined to go, mother and daughters entered upon the scheme with the greatest enthusiasm.

Each began to think of some useful thing that they could send to Si to add to his comfort. Mrs. Klegg had already knit a couple of pairs of lambs'-wool socks, and was at work on a third. Maria had knit a pair of mittens, gay with the National colors and representing the flag. The blue field with the white stars was around the wrists, while the red and white stripes ran down the fingers. When they were put on the effect was picturesque, not to say startling.

"When Si holds up his hands," remarked Matilda, "they'll look like big hollyhock blossoms, and the men'll wonder where he got posies in Winter."

Matilda contributed a red flannel shirt, upon which she had been engaged since the beginning of Winter reminded her that such a present would be very acceptable to Si. She had done a lot of her finest stitching upon it. Si's initials were wrought in white thread on the cuffs, and on the bosom was a maze of white lines representing hearts, anchors, roses, and flags of the Union. In the center of these, in letters of bold outline but rugged execution, was the legend: "Josiah Klegg. His Shirt. From Tildy."

"Round is the ring,
That has no end;
So is my love for you,
My dearest friend."

"I know it ain't quite right to speak of Si as a friend," she explained, when she spread the shirt out for the family's examination and admiration; "but I couldn't think of nothin' to rhyme with brother."

"I could," said Maria, in her superior way. "I'd said somethin' like this:

"The ring's no end
From which to t'other;
So is the love I send
My oneliest brother."

"Maria, you always was so much smarter'n me in writin' poetry," admitted Matilda. "It would've bin ever so much nicer. But it's too late now to do it over agin."

Annabel was sorely puzzled what to send. She wanted something that would be indicative of her feelings toward Si, and yet maiden modesty restrained with the fear of sending something that might be too significant. She spent a sleepless night thinking it over, and finally decided to send a new ambrotype of herself, with a lock of her hair. It is needless to say that this kept Si warmer than a whole bale of flannel shirts would have done.

A thousand things occurred to the family that Si would enjoy, from a couple of feather pillows to a crock of "head cheese," of which Si used to be immensely fond. The old hair trunk was brought down from the garret, and its dimensions studied. But the next evening Jim Wilkins, of Co. Q, who was home patching up a leg which had caught a bullet at Stone River, came in, and his advice was asked.

"No, sir-ree," said he, emphatically. "Don't you never take no trunk nor no box. Don't you take nothin' that you can't hang on to, and keep your eye on every minute. I think the Army o' the Cumberland is the most honestest army in the whole world. I'd knock any man down in a minute that hinted there was a single thief in it. All the same, the only sure way to keep any thing you want is to never let go of it for a second. You'd better only take a carpetsack, and look mighty sharp after that, the nearer you git to the army. Keep

one eye on it all the time after you cross the Ohio River, and both eyes on it when you git to Murfreesboro'."

A week later a strongly built, farmer-looking man entered the Nashville train at Louisville and looked anxiously around among the crowd of soldiers with which it



"A STOUTLY-BUILT, FARMER-LOOKING MAN ENTERED THE TRAIN."

was filled. His full, resolute face was destitute of whiskers, except a clump of sandy hair on his chin. He wore a coarse but warm overcoat, a black slouch hat, around his neck was a voluminous yarn comforter, and mittens of the same generous proportions were on his

hands, one of which held a bulging blue umbrella and the other a large striped carpetsack.

He found a vacant seat beside a rough-looking soldier, who had evidently been drinking, placed his precious carpetsack between his heavy, well-oiled boots, stuck his umbrella beside it, unwound his comforter, laid it back on his shoulders, took off his mittens, unbuttoned his overcoat, and took from his pocket a long plug of navy tobacco, from which he cut off a liberal chew and then courteously tendered knife and plug to his neighbor, with the remark:

"Have a chaw, stranger."

The soldier took the plug, cut it in two, put the bigger part in his own pocket, sliced a liberal portion off the other for his own mouth, and then rather reluctantly handed the remainder, with the knife, back to Mr. Klegg, without so much as a "thankee."

"Manners seem a little different in the army from what they are in Injianny," thought Mr. Klegg; "but mebbe the soldier's not had a chance to git any terbacker for a long time."

He chewed meditatively for some minutes, and then made another friendly advance toward his seat-partner.

"S'pose we'll start purty soon, won't we, stranger?"

"The devil you do," responded the other surlily, and sending over a strong whisky breath. "Don't know much about this blamed old start-when-it-pleases and stop-when-you-don't-want-to railroad. We'll start when some young sardine with shoulder-straps finishes his breakfast, and stop when John Morgan tears up the track. If you didn't feed your hogs any better'n this train runs, old Hayseed, they'd starve to death in a month."

"He ain't jest what you'd call perlite," thought Mr. Klegg, as he meditatively chewed for a little while longer.

"But mebbe that's the way in the army. Probably Si's got jest that way too."

He chewed meditatively for a few minutes longer. The air was getting very redolent of the fumes from his neighbor's breath. "I hope Si ain't got to drinking like that," he sighed, as a particularly strong whiff reached him. If he has, I won't rest a minute till I've yanked him up before Gen. Rosecrans and made him take the pledge. Gen. Rosecrans can't afford to have officers around him who drink. 'Taint right to trust men's lives to 'em."

"Say, ole Sorrel-top," said the soldier, turning toward him, "give us another bite o' that terbacker o' yours, will you?"

Mr. Klegg did not like the tone nor the manner, but he produced his tobacco, and began prudently clipping off a fair-sized chew for his companion himself.

"O, the devil, that ain't no chaw," said the other, pulling the tobacco and knife from his hand. "Don't be stingy with your terbacker, ole Hawbuck. You kin git plenty more."

He sliced a strip off clear across the plug, and stuffed it into his mouth.

"You don't chaw terbacker. You jest eat it," remonstrated the long-suffering Mr. Klegg.

"Here, I'll take some o' that, too," said another soldier on the seat in front, snatching at the knife and tobacco.

"No, you won't, you sardine," angrily responded the first soldier. "This gentleman's a friend o' mine. I won't see him robbed."

The reply was a blow, and the two were soon mixed up in a savage fight. Mr. Klegg was alarmed, lest one of them should be hurt with the heavy, sharp knife, and he mixed in to get it in his hand. In the scuffle his hat, mittens and comforter were thrown to the floor and

trampled in the tobacco juice. The provost-guard rushed in, a stalwart Sergeant separated the combatants, jammed the first soldier down in the seat until the timbers cracked, banged the other one's head against the side of the car, and remarked:

"Confound you, don't either o' you raise a hand or open your mouths, or I'll break both your necks. Old man, you keep mighty quiet, too. Hain't you got no sense, to mix up in such a row? You're old enough to know better. I'll snatch you off this train if you make any more disturbance."

Mr. Klegg's blood was up. He wanted to thrash the whole crowd, including the Sergeant, and felt equal to it. But the cry was raised that the train was going. The Sergeant hastened off, with a parting admonition to him to keep still if he knew what was good for him.

"I'm afeared the army's a mighty rough place," though Mr. Klegg, as he gathered up his soiled belongings and tried to straighten them out. "I wonder if it'll git wuss the nearer we git to the front?"

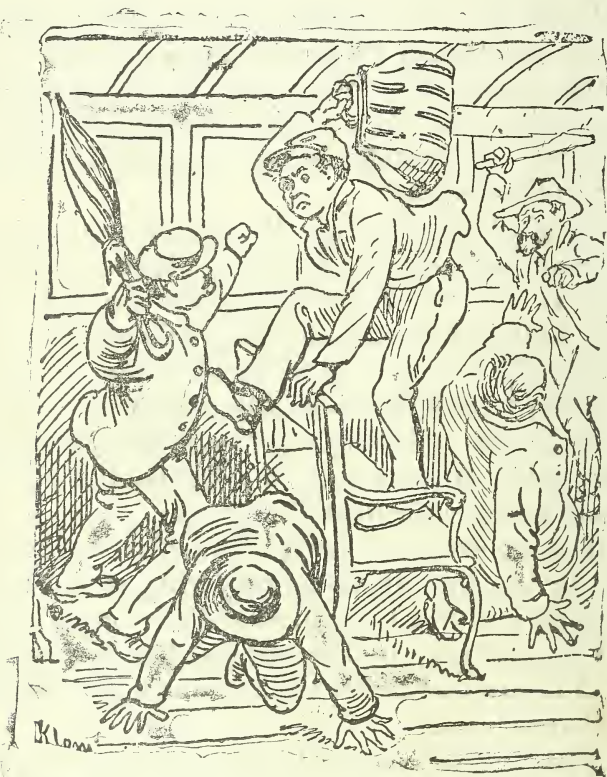
The train pulled out of Louisville, and he became interested in the great banks of red earth, crowned with surly, black-mouthed cannon, where the forts were, the rows of white tents in the camps, the innumerable droves of horses and mules in the corrals, and the long trains of army wagons.

"I'm goin' to stock up with some horses when I git back," he said to himself. "The Government *seems* to need a powerful sight o' them, and prices is goin' up faster'n wheat."

Things had now been tolerably quiet in the car for over half an hour, entirely too long for a party of soldiers returning to the front. Monotonous peace was obnoxious to them. A two-fisted young fellow up toward the front

rose up, drained the last drops from a pint flask, dashed the bottle on the floor, and yelled:

"Here's for a quiet life, and peace and good will. I belong to John F. Miller's Brigade, the best brigade in the



THE FREE FIGHT.

Army of the Cumberland, and the only one that captured any guns at Stone River. I can lick any man in McCook's Corps."

The answering yell that went up seemed to indicate that nearly all in the car belonged to McCook's Corps.

There was a general peeling off of overcoats, and a rush forward of answerers to his bold challenge. A few yelled,

"Hooray for Miller's Brigade!"

"Hooray for Crittenden's Corps!"

"Hooray for Pap Thomas!"

and started in to help out the Miller man. Mr. Klegg rose to his feet in dismay. Before he could think the soldier beside him picked up the carpetsack and flung it at the Miller's Brigade man. Mr. Klegg groaned as he thought of the consequences to a jar of honey and a crock of butter, which Mrs. Klegg had put in for Si's delectation.

The combatants came together with the hearty zeal of men who had been looking for a fight for a straight month. The soldier beside Mr. Klegg snatched up the umbrella and began laying about him. The crash was fearful. The backs of the seats were wrenched off, the carpetsack trodden under foot, the windows broken out, and finally Mr. Klegg found himself on the floor of the car under a mass of struggling, fighting, striking and kicking men.

The train came to a halt at a station. The guards on the platform rushed in, and by dint of a vigorous use of gun-butts and other persuasives, and more strong language than Mr. Klegg had ever heard before in all his life, succeeded in quieting the disturbance and making the men take their seats. Mr. Klegg recovered his carpetsack, his comforter, mittens, hat and umbrella, and sat down again. He turned around and glared at the soldier by his side.

"If it warn't for startin' another fight," he said to himself, "I'd punch his infernal head."

But the soldier had gone to sleep; he lolled his head over on Mr. Klegg's shoulder and snored loudly.

For two or three hours afterward the train rattled along without particular incident. Mr. Klegg recovered his

composure, and got very much interested in the country through which they were passing, and its farming possibilities. These did not strike him favorably, and he was more than ever convinced that the Wabash Valley was the garden spot of the world. Finally, the train stopped and backed on to a switch to allow another to pass.

An enterprising man had put up a shanty near the track, with a long shelf in front, upon which were displayed sandwiches, pies, boiled eggs, and other eatables. The men all rushed out of the car. Mr. Klegg had begun to feel hungry himself, and joined them.

"How much for that pie," he asked, pointing to one.

"Half-a-dollar," answered the keeper. "Fifty cents for pies, 25 cents for sandwiches, 10 cents for a cup of coffee."

"Too blamed much," shouted a chorus of voices. "An infernal pirate come down here to skin the soldiers. Let's clean him out."

Before Mr. Klegg fairly understood the words everything was snatched up. Those who did not get hold of any of the viands began on the shed. It was torn to pieces, the stove kicked over, the coffee spilled on the ground, and the eating-house keeper and his assistants scuttled away out of danger. The whistle sounded, they all rushed back into the cars, and Mr. Klegg had to stay his hunger with another chew of tobacco.

Again there was tolerable peace for several hours, broken at last by the sudden stoppage of the train out in the country, the sound of shots, and the yell of "Guerrillas! Guerrillas!"

Everybody bolted out of the cars. Those who had guns buckled on their cartridge-boxes, and formed in line, ready for orders. A squad of rebel cavalry had been trying to tear up the track, but were surprised by the unexpected appearance of the train. They had fallen back

to the top of the hill, to see how many were aboard, and whether it looked profitable to make an attack. They were keeping up a desultory fire at long range.



MR. KLEGG READY FOR ACTION.

Mr. Klegg had seen a gun standing in the corner as he ran out. He picked it up and joined one of the squads. He was no coward, and if there had to be fighting, he was willing to do his share.

"Bully for you, old Hayseed," said the man who had wanted to whip any man in the right wing of the army. "You're made of the right stuff, after all."

Others around him nodded approval, and Mr. Klegg was conscious that the social atmosphere was more pleasant for him.

The guerrillas finally decided to give the job up, and rode away, after yelling some very uncomplimentary things about Yankee soldiers generally.

When Mr. Klegg returned to his seat he found his carpetsack, umbrella, mittens, and comforter gone. Likewise the man who had been riding with him. He waxed very wroth, and lifted up his voice to let them know it. Several around began to guy him, but suddenly the man from Miller's Brigade forced his way through the crowd and asked:

"What's the matter, 'Squire?"

Mr. Klegg explained.

"Well, you've got to have every one of them things back again, if I've to lick every man on the train. I'll not see as old a man and as good a man as you are mistreated where I am. I've got a father myself."

This time he was in the large majority. All of McCook's men were with him. A general hunt was instituted through the train, and one by one his possessions were recovered and brought back to him.

"Thankee, gentlemen; thankee very kindly. Will any o' you gentlemen have a chaw o' terbacker? It's all I have to offer you, but it's good."

When the train pulled into Nashville that night a very ~~old~~ old farmer got off and inquired:

"How much further is it to Murfreesboro?"

"About 25 miles," someone answered.

"I'm awful glad to hear it. If it was 30 miles I don't believe I could stand it."

CHAPTER XV.

MR. KLEGG REACHES THE CAMP OF THE 200TH IND.

"Things don't look so tumultuous-like on this train," said Mr. Klegg, with a sigh of satisfaction, as he seated himself in the car for Murfreesboro' and deposited his valuables by his side. "I know that boys will be boys, and I like to see them have fun just as well as any other man, but I must say that they made things on that other train a little too lively for a middle-aged Deacon of the Baptist Church."

A broad-shouldered Provost-Sergeant walked through the car, with an air of authority, and gave orders to several who were seated in it.

"Must be the Constable, or Sheriff, or Town Marshal," mused Mr. Klegg. "I hope he'll stay on the train till we reach Murfreesboro', and keep order."

Mr. Klegg was right. The irregularities and disorders of the "rear" ended at Nashville. There the strict discipline of the "front" began under the iron sway of the Provost-Marshal, whose guards were everywhere, particularly at the depots and on the cars. The occupants of the car were as orderly as the boys at a country school when the master is on his throne, with his eyes about him.

It was a bright day, and the country roundabout of surpassing interest to the Indiana farmer. He saw the domed, stately capitol of Tennessee crowning the highest hill, and lording a glorious landscape of hill and valley, through which the Cumberland River flowed in majestic sweeps, like a broad girdle of sparkling silver. Then

came the frowning forts, with beetling banks of blood-red clay, with terror-striking black guns, with rugged palisades, and a porcupine bristle of abatis. Sentries with gleaming muskets paced their high parapets. Every mile, as far as he could see, was full of objects of engrossing interest.

He became so absorbed in the feast of his eyes that he did not observe that a middle-aged, clean-shaven man in a suit of dusty black had sat down beside him, and was studying him with attention.

"How do you do, my friend?" said he at length, putting out his hand.

Mr. Klegg turned with a start, and instinctively put out his hand.

"Howdy," he said, with a tone of little encouragement, for he would much rather have continued watching the country than indulge in purposeless conversation. The stranger grasped his hand warmly, and pressed his thumb upon the first joint of Mr. Klegg's, and caught his little finger in a peculiar way. Deacon Klegg had been initiated into the Odd Fellows, and he dimly recognized this as a "grip," but he could not associate it for the moment with any of the degrees of the brotherhood of the Three Links.

"Were you out late last night?" said the stranger in a low, deeply-impressive tone.

"Not pertickerlerly," answered Deacon Klegg, turning to catch a view of the stockade at La Vergne, where the 1st Mich. Eng. had made such a gallant defense. "I'd a mighty bothersome day, and was purty well tuckered out. I found a good place to sleep, and I turned in rather airy. Say," continued he, pointing to the wreckage of battle, "the boys seem to have poked it to 'em purty lively out there."

"It was a very sharp fight," returned the other; "but

for once our friend Wheeler made a mistake, and lost heavily. Down the road farther you'll see evidences of his more successful work, in some miles of burnt wagons."

"Bad man, that Gen. Wheeler," said the Deacon, looking steadfastly out of the window.

The stranger looked a little disappointed, but he rallied, and presently gave the second grand hailing sign of the Knights of the Golden Circle, in the same low, impressive tone:

"Did you see a star last night?"

"Can't say that I did," responded Mr. Klegg rather indifferently. "There was lots of gas-lamps burning, and I was rather taken with them, so that I didn't notice the moon or stars. Besides, as I told you before, I turned in purty airly, for I was tired with my ride from Looyville, and I wanted to git in good shape for the trip to-day."

A cloud of annoyance came upon the stranger's face, and he did not speak again for a minute or two. Then he said:

"You are from Indiana, are you not?"

"Yes," said Mr. Klegg.

"From Posey County?"

"Yes."

"I knew so. I've been looking for you for several days."

"Lookin' for me?" said Deacon Klegg, turning around in amazement. "How come you to be lookin' for ~~me~~? What business have you got with me? How'd ~~you know~~ I was a-comin'? Nobody knowed it outside o' Manar, my wife, and my family."

"Come, come, now," said the other impatiently. "Don't try to play off on me. You needn't be afraid. I'm all right. I'm Deputy Grand Organizer for the Knights for Southern Indiana and the jurisdiction of Louisville generally. You ought to rememb ~~me~~. I recollect you per-

fectly. I organized the Lodges in Poseyville, and all through your County. I planted the seed there for a big crop of Butternuts that'll help hurl the tyrant Lincoln from his bloody throne, and give the country back into the hands of the white men. I got word that you were



DEACON KLEGG AND THE KNIGHT OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE.

coming down with important information from your section for Gen. Bragg and John Morgan, and I've been on the lookout for you."

An understanding of what the man was, and what he was driving at, began to slowly filter into Deacon Klegg's mind, and his temper to rise.

"Confound you, you pizen Copperhead," he said wrathfully. "What do you take me for? Do you take me for a miserable, traitorous Knight o' the Golden Circle? I'm a member o' the church, or I'd punch your pizen head. I'm a loyal man, and I've got a son fightin' for the Union."

"H-u-s-h," said the unconvinced man, laying his hand on the Deacon's arm. "Don't talk so loud. They're watching us."

Klegg shook his hand off angrily, but the warning came too late. The Provost-Sergeant had been watching them, at the instigation of a sharp-eyed, clerkly-looking man in semi-uniform.

The Sergeant strode toward them, followed by a soldier with a gun.

"I arrest you both," said he. "You are men that we've been looking or. You'll stay right there in your seats 'till we get to Murfreesboro', and this man 'll see that you do."

The soldier took position at the end of the seat, and dropped the end of his musket on the floor with an I've-got-my-orders-an'-I'm-going-to-stay-right-here look on his face.

"You've been lookin' for me," gasped Deacon Klegg. "Who else's been lookin' for me, I'd like to know? Is the whole State o' Tennessee lookin' for me? What was you lookin' for me for? Think I've run away from Injianny without payin' my debts? Think I want to desert my wife and children? Young man, you don't know Josiah Klegg. I've got a quarter section of as good land as there is in the Wabash bottoms, and I don't owe a dollar on it. As for leavin' Maria Klegg, I wouldn't do it for the whole State of Injianny. What've you been lookin' for me for, I'd like to know?"

"Old man, I haven't time to talk to you, and it ain't

my business. You'll find out soon enough, when you git to headquarters, and so will your partner there."

"My partner," echoed Deacon Klegg. "This man's no partner o' mine. I never laid eyes on him till a half-hour ago."

"Continue your speech at headquarters," said the Sergeant, as he moved off. "I haven't time to listen to it now. You'd better save your breath till then, for you'll have to do some mighty slick talkin' to save your spying neck, I can tell you that."

Deacon Klegg sank back in the seat dumfounded. "What on airth kin he mean?" he gasped.

"It's another of the outrages of the despot Lincoln," answered his companion. "It's another of the arbitrary arrests by his military satraps. Liberty is dead in this country until we can overthrow that nigger-loving usurper."

"Shut up," said the Deacon savagely. "If you say another word I'll mash you. I won't be disturbed when I'm tryin' to think things out."

"I want that carpetsack and umbrella of yours," said the Sergeant, coming back. "I've no doubt you've got 'em both full of treasonable documents and information for your rebel friends. Guard, watch both these men closely, and see that they don't destroy any papers, nor throw anything out the window."

"Young man," said the Deacon resolutely, "you can't nave that carpetsack or that umbreller. They're my property. If you tech 'em I'll have the law on you. I'll sue you for trespass, larceny, assault and battery, and intent to provoke. I hain't done nothin' to justify it. I'm Josiah Klegg, of Posey County, Injianny, Deacon in the Ebenezer Church, on Mill Crick. I'm goin' down to Murfreesboro' to visit my son, Josiah Klegg, jr., o' the 200th Injianny Volunteers. You all know him. He's

an officer; he's the boy that tried to git a commissary wagon away from the rebels durin' the battle, and he and Shorty 've got a house with a tin roof."

The other occupants gathered around and laughed derisively.

"'Twon't do, old man," said the Sergeant, trying to wrest the carpetsack away. "You tell a pretty story, and you're well disguised, but we're onto you. We got full particulars about you from Louisville. You're a bad lot down there in Posey County. There's a Knights of the Golden Circle Lodge under every sycamore. You'd be at Gen. Bragg's headquarters to-morrow night if we let you alone."

He pulled hard at the carpetsack, and Deacon Klegg resisted with all his sturdy might. His strength was quite a match for the Sergeant's, but other soldiers came to help the latter. The handles came off in the struggle, and the Deacon was forced down into his seat. The other man took advantage of the confusion to work his way through the crowd to the door and jump off. This angered the Sergeant, and coming back to where Mr. Klegg sat, exhausted and intensely mad, he said:

"I'll make sure that you don't get away, anyhow. I ought to've done this at first."

So saying, he snapped a hand-cuff over Mr. Klegg's wrist and then over the arm of the seat.

The Deacon was never so humiliated in his life. He was simply speechless in his rage and mortification.

Among the many of Gen. Rosecrans's eccentricities and vagrant fancies was one for prowling around through his camps at night, wearing a private's overcoat and cap. One night he strolled into the camp of the 200th Ind. The superior architecture of Si and Shorty's cabin

struck him, and he decided to look inside. He knocked on the door.

"Come in," shouted Si.

He entered, and found Si engaged with Tom Billings in a game of checkers for the championship of the 200th Ind. Shorty was watching the game intently, as Si's counselor, and Zeke Tomkins was giving like assistance to Tom Billings. Two other crack players were acting as umpires. The light from the fire shone brightly upon them, but left the front of the room, where the General stood, in complete darkness. They were so absorbed in the game that they merely looked up, saw that the new comer was a private soldier, and supposed that he had merely dropped in to watch the game.

"Did you clean your feet on the bayonet outside the door," demanded Shorty, as he fixed his eyes again on the red and white grains of corn, which represented the men on the board.

"No, I forgot," said the General quietly.

"Well, go right outside and clean 'em off," ordered Shorty. "Don't want no mud tracked in here for us to carry out agin."

The General, much amused, went out, carefully scraped his boots, and then returned.

"All right" said Shorty, looking up as he re-entered. "Now look all you like, but don't say nothin'. Nobody's allowed to say a word but the players and the umpires."

The game proceeded in silence for several minutes, and the General became much interested. It was one of his peculiarities that he could not help getting interested in anything that his soldiers were doing, from the boiling of a cup of coffee or the pitching of a tent to the alignment of a company.

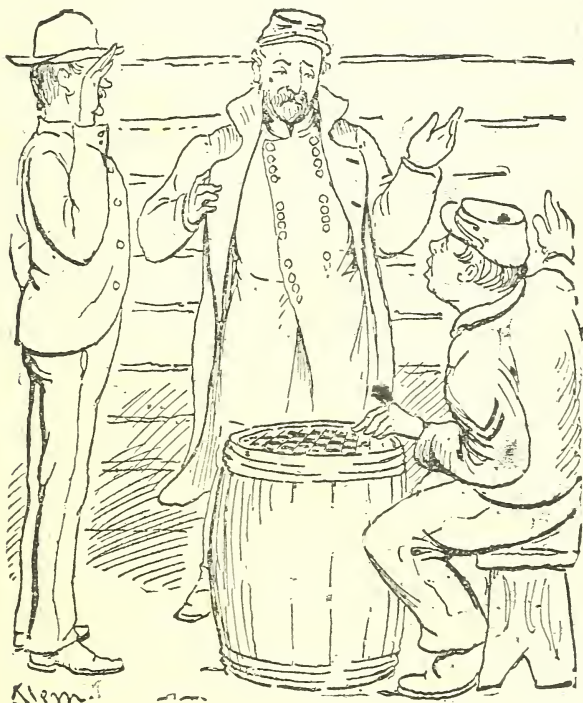
Si was getting a little the better of Billings, and the General's sympathies naturally went toward the loser.

He touched Billings on the shoulder, as he was about to make a move, and said:

"Don't do that. You'll open your king row. Move"—

Shorty was alert on the instant.

"Shut up," he commanded. "You've no business talkin'; I told you when you come in you weren't allowed to say nothin'."



THE GENERAL INTERRUPTS THE GAME.

"Excuse me," said the General; "I quite forgot."

"Well, see that you don't forgit agin," growled Shorty. "We've got quite enough talent in the game already. We don't want no more to come in."

Again the game proceeded in intent silence for some minutes. Then Si called out:

"Hold on; you can't jump backwards with that man. That aint no king."

"I say it is a king," said Billings. "I got him into the row half an hour ago, and crowned him. You knocked the crown off when you moved."

"I know better," asserted Shorty. "I've been watching that piece right along, and he's never been nearer the king-row than he is this minute."

A hot discussion ensued. The General forgot himself and joined in in his usual positive, authoritative way.

"I say the man had been crowned. I saw him crowned, and the crown afterward knocked off. There's the crown by the side there."

Shorty's wrath rose. "I told you when you come in here," he said sharply, "not to mix into this game. You've got no business in it. Keep your advice till it's asked for, or git out o' the tent. If you don't git out I'll put you out."

"Be careful, my man," said the General, speaking in his usual way. "You are talking to an officer."

"I don't care if you are a Lieutenant or a Captain, even," Si chimed in; "you have no business mixing in a quiet little game o' checkers between enlisted men."

"I am more than a Captain," said the General, opening his overcoat slightly, to show his double row of buttons.

"Bein' a Major or a Colonel don't make it much better," said Si, obdurately, but with much more respect.

"I'm higher than a Colonel," said the General, amusedly, and opening his overcoat a little farther.

"Excuse us, General," they all murmured, rising to their feet, and taking the position of a soldier.

"You don't command our brigade, do you?" said Shorty, trying to get a better view of the face.

"I command this brigade, and several others," said the General, smilingly enjoying their confusion.

"Lord, a Major-General commanding a corps," gasped poor Shorty, backing up with the rest into line, and saluting with the profoundest respect.

"Still higher," laughed the General, stepping forward to where the light fell full on his face. "I'm Maj.-Gen. Rosecrans, commanding this army. But don't be disturbed. You've done nothing. You are all entitled to your opinions, as free American citizens; but I will insist that that man had been in the king row, and should be crowned. But you settle that among yourselves.

"I merely dropped in to compliment you on the skill you have shown in building your house and its comfort. I'm glad to find that it looks even better inside than out. I know that you are good soldiers from the way you take care of yourselves. But so fine a house ought to have a better checker-board than a barrel-head, with grains of corn for men. Who are the owners of the house?

"Me and him," said Shorty, indicating himself and Si.

"Very good," said the General, "both of you report at my Headquarters to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock. Good night."

"Three cheers and a tiger for Old Rosey," yelled Shorty as soon as he could get his scattered wits together enough to say a word.

They gave three such rousing cheers that the rest of Co. Q came running out of their tents, and joined in cheering, as fast as the news could be communicated to them.

The next morning a squad of prisoners was being conducted toward Army Headquarters. At their head walked a stout, middle-aged farmer, carrying a portly blue umbrella. He had spent the night among the riotous spirits in the guard-house, and had evidently undergone much

wear and tear. He looked as if things had not been going his way at all. By him marched the stalwart Provost Sergeant, with a heavy striped carpetsack under his arm.

Gen. Rosecrans rode up at the head of his staff, from an early morning inspection of some part of the camp. The men saluted and cheered.

"Whom have you here, Sergeant?" said the General, reining up his horse beside the squad.

"That's Gen. Rosecrans," said one of the guards to Deacon Klegg.

"Nobody of importance," replied the Sergeant, "except this old man here. He's a Knight of the Golden Circle, that we've been watching for for some time, going through with information and other things from the Knights of Indiana to the enemy in Tullahoma. I've got his carpetsack here. I expect it's full of papers and contraband stuff. It feels as if it had lead in it. I am taking him to the Provost-Marshal's for examination."

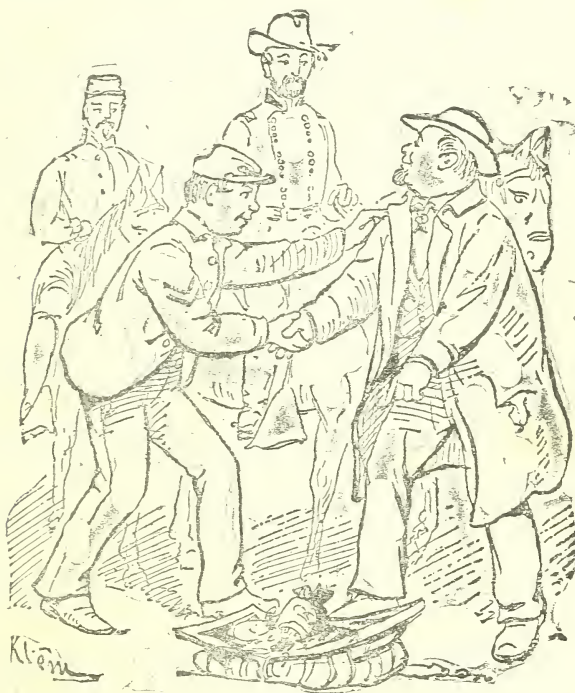
He set the heavy carpetsack down on the ground, to rest for a minute.

"Gen. Rosecrans, it's all a plaguey lie," burst out Deacon Klegg. "I'm as loyal a man as there is in the State of Injianny. I voted for Abe Lincoln and for Oliver P. Morton. I've come down here to visit my son, Josiah Klegg, jr., of the 200th Injianny Volunteers. You know him, General. He's one o' your officers. He's a Corporal. He's the boy that tried to take a commissary wagon away from the rebels durin' the battle, and he's got a house with a tin roof. You recollect that, don't you?"

Some of the staff laughed loudly, but the General checked them with a look, and spoke encouragingly to the Deacon.

"Yes, General," continued Mr. Klegg. "I knowed

you'd know all about him the minit I mentioned him to you. I told this over and over agin to these plaguey fools, but they wouldn't believe me. As to that carpet-sack havin' things for the enemy, it's the biggest lie that ever was told. I'll open it right here before you to show you. I've only got some things that my wife and the girls was sendin' to Si.



MEETING BETWEEN SI AND HIS FATHER.

He fumbled around for his keys.

"Possibly you have made a mistake, Sergeant," said the General. "What evidence have you?"

"We'd got word to look out for just such a man, who'd play off the dodge of being an old plug of a farmer on a visit to his son.

"He was on the train with a man whom all the detectives know as one of the worst Knights in the gang. They were talking together all the way. I arrested the other one, too, but he slipped away in the row this man made to distract our attention."

In the meanwhile Deacon Klegg had gotten his carpet-sack open for the General's inspection. It was a sorry sight inside. Butter, honey, shirts, socks, boots, and cakes are excellent things taken separately, but make a bad mixture. Deacon Klegg looked very dejected. The rest grinned broadly.

"I don't seem to see anything treasonable so far," said the General. "Sergeant, take the rest of your prisoners up to the Provost-Marshall, and leave this man with me."

"Gen. Rosecrans," said a familiar voice, "you ordered us to report to you this mornin' at 10 o'clock. We're here."

The General looked up and saw Corp'l Si Klegg and Shorty standing at a "salute."

"Si!" said the Deacon, joyously, sticking out a hand badly smeared with honey and butter.

"Pap!" shouted the Corporal, taking the hand in rapture. "How in the world did you git down here?"

They all laughed now, and the General did not check them.

"Corporal," said he, "I turn this man over to you. I'll hold you responsible that he don't communicate with the enemy. But come on up to Headquarters and get your checker-board. I have a very nice one for you."

CHAPTER XVI

DEACON KLEGG HAS A LITTLE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE IN THE ARMY.

"Pap," said Si, by way of introduction, "this is Shorty, my pardner, and the best pardner a feller ever had, and the best soldier in the Army of the Cumberland."

"Glad to see you, Mr. Klegg," said Shorty, reddening and grasping the father's outstretched hand; "but you orter've broke that boy o' your'n o' lyin' when he was young."

"He never did lie," said the Deacon cheerfully, "and I don't believe he's lyin' now. I've heard a great deal o' you, Mr. Shorty, and I'm sure he's tellin' the truth about you."

"Drop the Mister, Pap," said Si. "We never call each other Mister here, except when we're mad."

Si took the carpetsack under his arm, and they trudged up toward Army Headquarters.

Relieved of anxiety as to his own personal safety, and having found his son, Deacon Klegg viewed everything around him with open-eyed interest. It was a wonderfully new and strange world into which the sober, plodding Indiana farmer had dropped. The men around him spoke the speech to which his ears were accustomed, but otherwise they were as foreign as if they had come from the heart of China. Their dress, their manners, their actions, the ways in which they were busying themselves, had no resemblance to anything seen on the prosaic plains of the Wabash in his half-century of life there. The infantry sweeping over the fields in endless waves, the dashing cavalcades of officers and staffs, the

bewildering whirl of the light batteries dazed him. Even Si awed him. It was hard to recognize in the broad-shouldered, self-assured young soldier, who seemed so entirely at home in his startling surroundings, the blundering, bashful hobbledohoy of a few months before, whose feet and hands were constantly in the way, and into everything else that they should not be.

"Somehow, Si," he said, looking at his offspring with contemplative eye, "you seem to have growed like a cornstalk in July, and yit when I come to measure you up you don't seem no taller nor heavier than when you went away. How is it?"

"Don't know, Pap," Si answered. "I feel as if I'd had more'n 10 long years o' growth since we crossed the Ohio River. Yit, you don't seem a minute older than when I went away."

"I didn't feel no older," returned the father," until I got in that guard-house last night. Then I could feel my hair gittin' grayer every hour, and my teeth droppin' out."

"I'm afraid you didn't git much chance to sleep, Pap," said Si sympathetically.

"Loss o' sleep was the least part of it," said the Deacon feelingly. "I kin stand a little loss o' sleep without any partickler bother. It wasn't bein' kept awake so much as the way I was kept awake that wore on me."

"Why, what happened?" asked Si.

"Better ask what didn't happen," groaned his father. "Used to have some mighty rough shivarees when I was a boy, and'd jest settled on the Wabash. Lots o' toughs then, 'specially 'mong the flatboatmen, who'd nothin' to drink but new sod-corn whisky, that'd a fight in every spoonful. But for pure, straight-out tumultuousness that guard-house last night gave six pecks for every bushel of a Wabash shivaree."

Shorty looked meaningly at Si. "Guard-house fellers's likely to be a ructionary lot o' roosters. Awful sorry you got in among 'em. Was they very bad?"

"Well, I should say. When I was chucked in they wuz havin' a regular prize fight, 'cordin' to rules, as to whether Rousseau or Negley wuz the best General. The Rousseau man got licked, and then the other Rousseau men wuzzent satisfied, and proposed to lick all the Negley men in the guard-house; but the Sheridan men interfered, and made the Rousseau men cool down. Then they turned their attention to me. They raised a row about a citizen being put in among them. It was a disgrace. The guard-house was only intended for soldiers and gentlemen, and no place for condemned civilians. Then someone said that I had been arrested as a Knight o' the Golden Circle, on my way to Bragg, with information from the Injianny Knights. Another insisted that he knowed me, and that I wuz Vallandigham himself, brought down there to be sent through the lines. Then I thought sure they'd kill me on the spot. I begged and pled and denied. Finally, they organized a court-martial to try me for my life. They had an awful tonguey feller that acted as Prosecutin' Attorney, and the way he blackguarded me was a shame. He said that traitor was wrote in every liniment o' my face; that I wuz a dyed-in-the-wool butternut, and that the bag I'd brung along with me contained the muster-rolls of 100,000 Injiannians who'd bin swore in to fight for Jeff Davis.

"The feller that they appinted to defead me admitted the truth of all that the other feller'd said. He said that no one could look in my Southern Injianny face without seein' Secession, treason and nigger-lovin' wrote there in big letters. He could only ask the honorable court for mercy instid o' justice, and that I be shot instid o' hung, as I deserved.

"When they asked me what I'd got to say in my own defense I told 'em the truth, and said that I'd come down here to visit my son, who they all knowed—they must know Si Klegg, o' the 200th Injianny Volunteers, who was an officer, and had a house with a tin roof.

"Then they all got up and yelled. They said they knowed Si Klegg only too well; that he wuz the meanest, orneriest soljer in the army, and that he looked just like me. They had him in the guard-house now. He'd bin put in for stealin' a hoe-cake from a blind nigger half-way back to Nashville durin' the battle.

"They brought up the dirtiest, scaliest lookin' man in the guard-house, and said that was Si Klegg, and that he resembled me so much that they wuz sure he wuz my son. They asked him if he reckernized me as his dad, and after they kicked him two or three times **he** said he did; but he wuz goin' to cut his throat now, since they'd found it out. He couldn't stand everything. Then they said they'd postpone execution on condition that I'd kneel down, drink a pint o' whisky, take the oath o' allegiance to Abe Lincoln, and sing 'We'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour-apple tree.'

"I told 'em I wuz perfectly willin' to take the oath to Abe Lincoln as often as they pleased; that he wuz my man from start to finish; that I wanted Jeff Davis hung the minit we ketched him. I'd sing the song if they'd learn it to me, though I've not sung anything but hymns for the last 25 years. As for the whisky, I wouldn't tetch it on no account, for I belonged to the Good Templars.

"They all seemed pacified with this except one man, who insisted that I should drink the whisky. One o' the Sherican men knocked him down, and then the fight between the Rousseau men and the Negley men broke out afresh, and the guard come in and quieted things.

By the time they'd done this they found that the man who had reckernized me as his father wuz tryin' to hang himself with a picce o' tent-rope. They cut him down, larruped him with the tent-rope, and then started another court to try me for havin' sich a son. But some officer come in and took out the Prosecutin' Attorney and the lawyer for the defense and the Presidin' Judge and



"HIS HONOR" AND THE "ATTORNEY" BUCKED AND GAGGED.

bucked and gagged 'em. This cooled things down agin till mornin'."

"We might walk over to the Provost-Marshal's," sug-

gested Shorty, "and watch for them fellers as they come out, and take a drop out o' some of 'em."

"It'll be a waste o' time," said Si, with a shrug of his shoulders. "They'll all be doing hard labor for the next 30 days, and by that time we'll likely have a good deal else to think about. Let's report at Headquarters, and then take Dad over and show him our new house."

"Yes, I'm dying to see it," said the Deacon, "and to git somewhere that I kin sit down in peace and quietness. Seems to me I haven't had a moment's rest for years, and I'm as nigh tuckered out as I ever wuz in my life."

At the Army Headquarters was a crowd of officers, mounted and dismounted. Aids were arriving and departing, and there was a furore when some General commanding a corps or division came or went, which impressed the father greatly. Si and Shorty stood at "attention," and respectfully saluted as the officers passed, and the Deacon tried awkwardly, but his best, to imitate their example. Two or three spruce young Orderlies attempted to guy him, but this thing came to a sudden stop when Shorty took one of them quietly by the ear, and said in a low voice:

"Don't be brash, bub. If you only knowed it, you're givin' your measure for a first-class, custom-made lickin', and I'm the artist to do the job. That old man's my chum's father, and I won't allow no funny business 'round where I am."

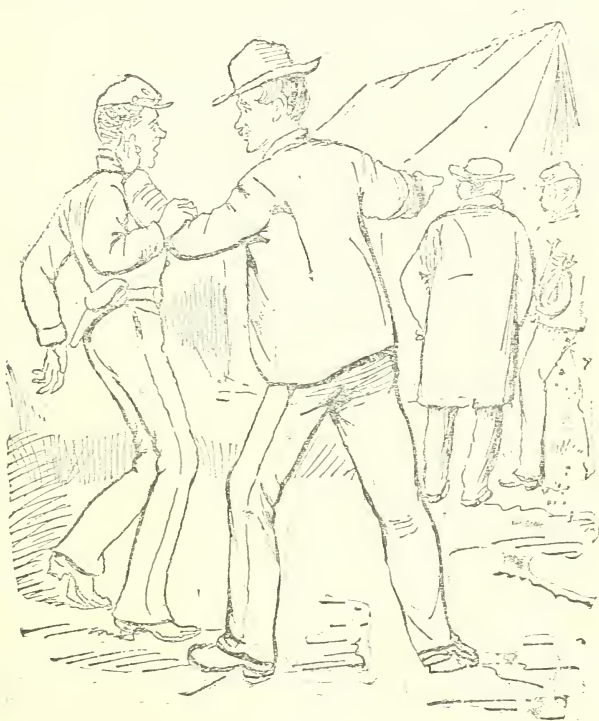
"We wuz ordered to report to Gen. Rosecrans," said Si to the Orderly on duty before the tent.

"What are you to report for?" asked a member of the staff, standing near. The General is very busy now, and can see no one. Who ordered you to report?"

"The General himself," said Si.

[The sound of his voice reached Gen. Rosecrans, in-

side, and busy as he was, arrested his attention. With the kindly thoughtfulness that so endeared him to his soldiers he instantly remembered his promise, dropped his pen, and came to the door.



SHORTY ADMONISHES THE ORDERLY.

"I ordered these men to report," he said to the Aid. "Bring me that checkerboard which lies on my table."

The Aid did so. Gen. Rosecrans noticed the father, and, as usual, saw the opportunity of doing a kindly, gracious thing.

"You have found your son, I see," he said to him. "Sorry that you had so much trouble. That's a fine son you have. One of the very best soldiers in my army. I

congratulate you upon him. Boys, here is your board and men. I may drop in some evening and see you play a game. I'll be careful to clean my feet, this time."

Si and Shorty got very red in the face at this allusion, and began to stammer excuses. The General playfully pinched Si's ear and said:

"Go to your quarters now, you young rascal, and take your father with you. I hope he'll have a very pleasant time while he is in camp."

They saluted and turned away too full for utterance. After they had gone a little distance the Deacon remarked, as if communing with himself:

"And that is Gen. Rosecrans. Awful nice man. Nicest man I ever saw. Greatest General in the world. Won't this be something to tell Mariar and the girls. And the men down at the store. I'd 've come down here 40 times jest to 've seen him and talked with him. What'd last night in the guard-house amount to, after all? A man must expect some trouble occasionally. Wouldn't have no fun if he didn't. Say, Si, you remember Old Susy's chestnut colt?"

"Yes," answered Si.

"I thought he had in him the makin' o' the finest horse in Posey County."

"Yes," said Si.

"Well, he's turnin' out even better'n I thought he would. Shouldn't wonder if he could trot down somewhere nigh 2:40."

"You don't say so?"

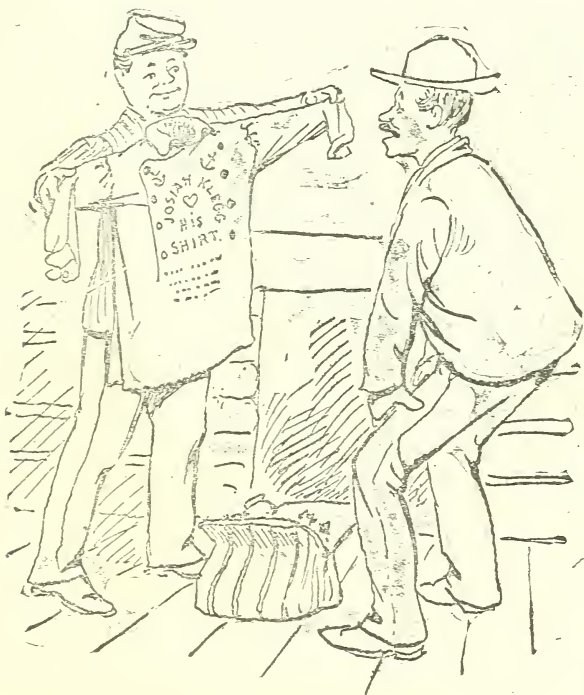
"Yes, indeed. You used to want that colt mighty bad, Si."

"I remember that I did, Pap."

"Well, Si, I'll give you that colt, and take good care o' him till you come home, for that e'er checker-board."

When they arrived at their house Si and Shorty ar-

ranged the things so as to give the Deacon a most comfortable rest after his trying experiences, and cooked him the best dinner their larder would afford. After dinner they filled him a pipe-full of kinnikinnick, and the old gentleman sat down to enjoy it while Si and Shorty



SHORTY ADMIRES SI'S SHIRT.

investigated the contents of the carpetsack. They found endless fun in its woful condition. The butter and honey were smeared over everything, in the rough handling which it had endured. They pulled out the shirt, the socks, the boots, the paper and books, and scraped off carefully as much as they could of the precious honey and butter.

"It's too good to waste the least bit," said Shorty, tasting it from time to time with unction. "Don't mind a hair or two in the butter, this time, Si. I kin believe your mother is a good buttermaker. It's the best I ever tasted."

"Well, the butter and the honey may be spiled," said Si, "but the other things are all right. My, ain't this a nice shirt. And them socks. Shorty, did you ever see such socks. Ever so much obliged to you, Pap, for these boots. Old Hank Scmmers's make. He's the best shoemaker in the State of Injianny. No Quartermaster's cowhide about them. And"—

Si stopped. He had suddenly come across Annabel's ambrotype. He tried to slip it into his pocket without the others seeing him. He edged awkwardly to the door.

"You look over the rest o' the things, Shorty," he said, with a blush that hid his freckles. "I've got to go down and see the Orderly-Sergeant."

Shorty and the Deacon exchanged very profound winks.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DEACON RAPIDLY ACQUIRES EXPERIENCE OF LIFE IN THE ARMY.

Si asked questions of his father about the folks at home and the farm until the old gentleman's head ached, and he finally fell asleep through sheer exhaustion.

The next day the Deacon took a comprehensive survey of the house, and was loud in his praises of Si and Shorty's architecture.

"Beats the cabin I had to take your mother to, Si, when I married her," he said with a retrospective look in his eye, "though I'd got up a sight better one than many o' the boys on the Wabash. Lays a way over the one that Abe Lincoln's father put up on Pigeon Crick, over in Spencer County, and where he brung the Widder Johnston when he married her. I remember it well. About the measliest shack there wuz in the country. Tom Lincoln, Abe's father, wuz about as lazy as you make 'em. They say nothin' will cure laziness in a man, but a second wife 'll shake it up awfully. The Widder Johnston had lots o' git up in her, but she found Tom Lincoln a dead load. Abe wuz made o' different stuff."

"Yes," continued the father, growing reminiscential. "There wuz no tin roof, sawed boards, glass winder nor plank door in that little shack on the Wabash, but some o' the happiest days in my life wuz spent in it. Me and your mother wuz both young, both very much in love, both chock full o' hope and hard day's work. By the time you wuz born, Si, we'd got the farm and the house in much better shape, but they wuz fur from being what they are to-day."

"If we only had a deed for a quarter section o' land around our house we'd be purty well started in life for young men," ventured Si."

"I'd want it a heap sight better land than this is 'round here," said the Deacon, studying the landscape judiciously. "Most of it that I've seen so far is like self-righteousness—the more a man has the worse he's off. Mebbe it'll raise white beans, but I don't know o' nothin' else, except niggers and poverty. The man that'd stay 'round here, scratchin' these clay knobs, when there's no law agin him goin' to Injianny or Illinoy, haint gumption enough to be anything but a rebel. That's my private opinion publicly expressed."

"Pap," said Si, after his father had been a day in camp, "I think we've done fairly well in providin' you with a house and a bed, but I'm afeared that our cookin's not quite up to your taste. You see, you've bin badly pampered by mother. I might say that she's forever spiled you for plain grub and common cookin'."

"Your mother's the best cook that ever lived or breathed," said the Deacon earnestly. "She kin make plain cornbread taste better than any body else's pound cake. But you do well, Si, considerin' that your mother could never git you to so much as help peel a mess o' 'taters. Your coffee'd tan a side o' sole leather, and there's enough grease about your meat to float a skiff; but I didn't expect to live at a hotel when I come down here."

The Deacon strolled down near Regimental Headquarters. An Aid came up and, saluting the Colonel, said:

"Colonel, the General presents his compliments, and instructs me to say that he has received orders from Division Headquarters to send details of a Corporal and five men from each regiment there to-morrow morning at 7 o'clock for fatigue duty. You will furnish yours."

"Very good," answered the Colonel, returning the salute. "Adjutant, order the detail."

"Sergeant-Major," said the Adjutant, after a momentary glance at his roster, "send an order to Capt. McGillicuddy, of Co. Q, for a Corporal and five men for fatigue duty, to report at Division Headquarters at 7 to-morrow morning."

The Deacon walked toward Co. Q's quarters, and presently saw the Orderly hand the Captain the order from the Colonel.

"Orderly-Sergeant," said the Captain, "detail a Corporal and five men to report for fatigue duty at Division Headquarters to-morrow at 7 o'clock."

The Orderly-Sergeant looked at his roster, and then walked down to Si's residence.

"Klegg," said he, "you will report for fatigue duty at Division Headquarters to-morrow at 7 o'clock with five men. You will take Shorty, Simmons, Sullivan, Tomkins and Wheeler with you."

"Very good, sir," said Si, saluting.

"Si," said his father, with a quizzical smile, "I've bin wonderin', ever since I heard that you wuz an officer, how much o' the army you commanded. Now I see that if it wuz turned upside down you'd be on the very top."

"He leads the army when it goes backward," interjected Shorty.

"Gracious, Pap," said Si, good-humoredly, "I haven't rank enough to get me behind a saplin' on the battlefield. The Colonel has the pick o' the biggest tree, the Lieutenant-Colonel and Major take the next; the Captains and Lieutenants take the second growth, and the Sergeants have the saplins. I'm lucky if I git so much as a bush."

"Old Rosecrans must have a big saw-log," said his father.

"Not much saw-log for Old Rosey," said Si, resenting even a joking disparagement upon his beloved General. "During the battle he wuz wherever it wuz the hottest, and on horseback, too. Wherever the firin' wuz the loudest he'd gallop right into it. His staff was shot down all around him, but he never flinched. I tell you, he's the greatest General in the world."

The next morning after breakfast, and as Si and Shorty were preparing to go to Division Headquarters, Si said:

"Pap, you just stay at home and keep house to-day. Keep your eyes on the boys; I tell it to you in confidence, for I wouldn't for the world have it breathed outside the company, that Co. Q's the most everlastin' set o' thieves that ever wore uniform. Don't you ever say a word about it when you get home, for it'd never do to have the boys' folks know anything about it. It'd break their hearts. Me and Shorty, especially Shorty, are the only honest ones in the company. The other fellers'd steal the house from over your head if you didn't watch 'em."

"That's so," asseverated Shorty. "Me and Si—especially me—is the only honest ones in the company. We're the only ones you kin really trust."

"I'd be sorry to think that Si had learned to steal," said the Deacon gravely, at which Shorty could not resist the temptation to give Si a furtive kick. "But I'll look out for thieves. We used to have lots o' them in Posey County, but after we hung one or two, and rid some others on rails, the revival meetin's seemed to take hold on the rest, and they got converted."

"Something like that ought be done in the army," murmured Shorty.

"When you want anything to eat you know where to git it," said Si, as they moved off. "We'll probably be back in time to git supper."

The Deacon watched the squad march away, and then turned to think how he would employ himself during the day. He busied himself for awhile cleaning up the cabin and setting things to rights, and flattered himself that his housekeeping was superior to his son's. Then he decided to cut some wood. He found the ax, "condemned" it for some time as to its dullness and bad condition, but finally attacked with it a tree which had been hauled up back of the company line for fuel. It was hard work, and presently he sat down to rest. Loud words of command came from just beyond the hill, and he walked over there to see what was going on. He saw a regiment drilling, and watched it for some minutes with interest. Then he walked back to his work, but found to his amazement that his ax was gone. He could see nobody around on whom his suspicions could rest.

"Mebbe somebody's borrowed it," he said, "and will bring it back when he's through usin' it. If he don't I kin buy a better ax for 10 or 12 bits. Somebody must have axes for sale 'round here somewhere."

He waited awhile for the borrower to return the tool, but as he did not, he gathered up a load of wood and carried it up to the cabin.

"The boys'll be mighty hungry when they git back this evenin'," said he to himself. "I'll jest git up a good supper for 'em. I'll show Si that the old man knows some p'int about cookin', even if he haint bin in the army, that'll open the youngster's eyes."

He found a tin pan, put in it a generous supply of beans, and began carefully picking them over and blowing the dust out, the same as he had often seen his wife do. Having finished this to his satisfaction, he set down the pan and went back into the cabin to get the kettle to boil them in. When he returned he found that pan and beans had vanished, and again he saw no one upon

whom he could fix his suspicions. The good Deacon began to find the "old Adam rising within him," but as a faithful member of the church he repressed his choler.

"I can't hardly believe all that Si and Shorty said about the dishonesty of Co. Q," he communed with himself. "Many o' the boys in it I know—they're right from our neighborhood. Good boys as ever lived, and honest as the day is long. Some o' them belonged to our Sunday-school. I can't believe that they've turned out bad so soon. Yet it looks awful suspicious. The last one I see around here was Jed Baskins. His father's a reggerly ordained preacher. Jed never could 've took them beans. But who on airth done it?"

The Deacon carefully fastened the door of the cabin, and proceeded with his camp-kettle to the spring to get some water. He found there quite a crowd, with many in line waiting their chance at the spring. He stood around awhile awaiting his chance, but it did not seem to get any nearer. He said something about the length of time it took, and a young fellow near remarked:

"Here, Uncle, give me your kittle. I'll git it filled for you."

Without a thought the Deacon surrendered the kettle to him, and he took his place in line. The Deacon watched him edging up toward the spring for a minute or two, and then his attention was called to a brigade manuvering in a field across the river. After awhile he thought again about his kettle, and looked for the kindly young man who had volunteered to fill it. There were several in the line who looked like him, but none whom he could positively identify as him.

"Which o' you boys got my kittle?" he inquired, walking along the line.

"Got your kittle, you blamed teamster," they answered crossly. "Go away from here. We don't allow

teamsters at this spring. It's only for soldiers. Go to your own spring."

His kettle was gone too. That was clear. As the Deacon walked back to the cabin he was very hot in the region of his collar. He felt quite shamefaced, too, as to the way the boys would look on his management, in the face of the injunctions they had given him at parting. His temper was not improved by discovering that while he was gone someone had carried off the bigger part of the wood he had laboriously chopped and piled up in front of the cabin. He sat down in the doorway and meditated angrily:

"I'll be dumbled (there, I'm glad that Mariar didn't hear me say that. I'm afeared I'm gittin' to swear just like these other fellers). I'll be dumbled if I ever imagined there wuz sich a passel o' condemned thieves on the face o' the airth. And they all seem sich nice, gentlemanly fellers, too. What'll we do with them when they git back home?"

Presently he roused himself up to carry out his idea of getting a good meal ready for the boys by the time they returned, tired and hungry. He rummaged through the cabin, and came across an old tin bucket partially filled with scraps of paper. There did not seem to be anything of value in it, and he tossed the contents on the smoldering fire. Instantly there was an explosion which took the barrel off the top of the chimney, sent the stones rattling down, filled the room full of smoke, singed the Deacon's hair and whiskers, and sped him out of the cabin in great alarm. A crowd quickly gathered to see what was the matter. Just then Si appeared at the head of his squad. He and Shorty hurried to the scene of the disturbance.

"What is the matter, Pap?" Si asked anxiously.

"Why," explained his father, "I was lookin' 'round

for something to git water in, and I found an old tin bucket with scraps o' paper in. I throwed them in the fire, and I'm feared I busted your fireplace all to pieces. But I'll help you to fix it up agin," he added deprecatingly.



DEACON KLEGG IS SURPRISED.

"But you ain't hurt any, are you, Pap?" asked Si, anxiously examining his father, and ignoring all thought as to the damage to the dwelling.

"No," said his father cheerfully. "I guess I lost a little hair, but I could spare that. It was about time to git it cut anyway. I think we kin fix up the fireplace, Si."

"Cuss the fireplace, so long's you're all right," answered Si. "A little mud 'll straighten that out." You got

hold o' the bucket where me and Shorty 've bin savin' up our broken cartridges for a little private Fourth o' July some night."

"But, Si," said the Deacon sorrowfully, determined to have it all out at once. "They're bigger thieves than you said they wuz. They've stole your ax—but I'll buy you a better one for 10 or 12 bits; they took your pan and beans, an' took your camp-kittle, and finally all the wood that I'd cut."

He looked so doleful that the boys could not help laughing.

"Don't worry about them, Pap," said Si cheerfully. "We'll fix them all right; Let's go inside and straigh en things up, and then we'll have smething to eat."

"But you can't git nothin' to eat," persisted the Deacon, "because there's nothin' to cook in."

"We'll have something, all the same," said Shorty, with a wink of enjoyable anticipation at Si.

The two boys carefully stowed away their overcoats, which were rolled up in bundles in a way that would be suspicious to a soldier. They got the interior of the cabin in more presentable shape, and then Shorty went out and produced a camp-kettle from somewhere, in which they made their coffee. When this was ready, they shut the door and carefully unrolled their overcoats. A small sugar-cured ham, a box of sardines, a can of peaches, and a couple of loaves of fresh, soft bread developed.

"Yum-yum!" murmured Shorty, gloating over the viands.

"Where in the world did you git them, boys?" asked the Deacon in wonderment.

"Eat what is set before you, and ask no questions, for conscience' sake, Pap," said Si, slicing off a piece of the

ham and starting to broil it for his father. "That's what you used to tell me."

"Si," said the father sternly, as an awful suspicion moved his mind, "I hope you didn't steal 'em."

"Of course not, Pap. How kin you think so?"



TRYING TO CONQUER THE DEACON'S SCRUPLES.

"Josiah Klegg," thundered the father, "tell me how you came by them things?"

"Well, Pap," said Si, considerably abashed, "it was something like this: Our squad was set to work to unload a car o' Christian Commission things. Me and Shorty pulled off our overcoats and laid them in a corner. When we got through our work and picked up our coats we found these things in them. Some bad men had hid

them there, thinkin' they wuz their overcoats. We thought the best way wuz to punish the thieves by takin' the things away with us. Now, here's a piece o' ham briled almost as nice as mother could do. Take it, and cut you off a slice of that soft bread.'

"Si, the receiver's as bad as the thief. I won't touch it."

"Pap, the harm's been done. No matter who done it, the owner'll never see his victuals agin. Jest as like he cribbed 'em from somebody else. These Christian Commission things wuz sent down for us soljers anyhow. We'd better have 'em than the bummers around the rear. They'll spile, and be wasted if you don't eat 'em, and that'd be a sin."

The savory ham was very appetizing, the Deacon was very hungry, and the argument was sophistical.

"I'll take it, Si," said he with a sigh. "I don't wonder that the people down here are rebels and all that sort o' thing. It's in the air. I've felt my principles steadily weakenin' from the time I crossed the Ohio River."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DEACON CONTINUES TO ACQUIRE VOLUMES OF MILITARY EXPERIENCE.

With the Deacon's assistance, the chimney was soon rebuilt better than ever, and several homelike improvements were added. The lost utensils were also replaced, one by one. The Deacon was sometimes troubled a little in his mind as to where the pan, the camp-kettle, etc., came from. Si or Shorty would simply bring in one of them, with a sigh of satisfaction, and add it to the household stock. The Deacon was afraid to ask any questions.

One day, however, Shorty came in in a glow of excitement, with a new ax in his hand.

"There; isn't she a daisy," he said holding it up and testing the edge with his thumb. "None o' your old sledges with no more edge than a maul, that you have to nigger the wood off with. Brand new, and got an edge like a razor. You kin chop wood with that, I tell you."

"It's a tolerable good ax. Wuth about 10 bits," said the Deacon, examining the ax critically. "Last ax I bought from Ol Taylor cost 12 bits. It was a better one. How much'd you give for this? I'll pay it myself."

"Do you know Jed Baskins thinks himself the best eucher player in the 200th Ind.," said Shorty, forgetting himself in the exultation of his victory.

"Jed Baskins—the Rev. Jared Baskins's son—a eucher player," gasped the Deacon. "Why, his father'd no more tech a card than he would a coal o' fire. Not so much, for I've often heard him say that a coal o' fire kin only burn the hands, while cards scorch the soul."

"Well, Jed," continued Shorty, "bantered me to play

three games out o' five for this here ax agin my galvanized brass watch. We wuz hoss and hoss on the first two games; on the saw-off we had four pints apiece. I dealt and turned up the seven o' spades. Jed ordered me up, and then tried to ring in on me a right bower from another deck, but I knowed he hadn't it, because I'd tried



"HOW MUCH'D YOU GIVE FOR THIS?"

to ketch it in the deal, but missed it and slung it under the table. I made Jed play fair, and euchered him, with only two trumps in my hand. Jed's a mighty slick hand with the pasteboards, but he meets his boss in your Uncle Ephraim. I didn't learn to play eucher in the hay lofts o' Bean Blossom Crick for nothin', I kin tell you."

An expression of horror came into Deacon Klegg's face, and he looked at Shorty with severe disapproval, which was entirely lost on that worthy, who continued to prattle on:

"Jed Baskins kin slip in more cold decks on green-horns than any boy I ever see. You'd think he'd spent his life on a Mississippi steamboat or follerin' a circus. You remember how he cleaned out them Maumee Muskrats at chuch-a-luck last pay-day? Why, there wuzn't money enough left in one company to buy postage stamps for their letters home. You know how he done it? Why, that galoot of a citizen gambler that we tossed in a blanket down there by Nashville, and then rid out o' camp on a rail, learned him how to finger the dice. I was sure some o' them Maumee Smart Alecks'd git on to Jed, but they didn't. I declare they wouldn't see a six-mule team if it druv right acrost the board afore 'em. But I'm onto him every minit. I told him when he tried to ring in that jack on me that he didn't know enough about cards to play with our Sunday-school class on Bean Blossom Crick."

"Josiah Klegg," said the Deacon sternly, "do you play cards?"

"I learned to play jest a little," said Si deprecatingly, and getting very red in the face. "I jest know the names o' the cards, and a few o' the rules o' the game."

"I'm surprised at you," said the Deacon, "after the careful way you wuz brung up. Cards are the devil's own picture-books. They drag a man down to hell jest as sure as strong drink. Do you own a deck o' cards?"

"No, sir," replied Si. "I did have one, but I throwed it away when we wuz goin' into the battle o' Stone River."

"Thank heaven you did," said the Deacon devoutly. "Think o' your goin' into battle with them infernal

things on you. They'd draw death to you jest like iron draws lightnin'."

"That's what I wuz afeared of," Si confessed.

"Now, don't you ever touch another card," said the Deacon. "Don't you ever own another deck. Don't you insult the Lord by doin' things when you think you're safe that you wouldn't do when you're in danger and want His protection."

"Yes, sir," responded Si very meekly. The Deacon was so excited that he pulled out his red bandana, mopped his face vigorously, and walked out of the door to get some fresh air. As his back was turned, Si reached slyly up to a shelf, pulled down a pack of cards, and flung them behind the back-log.

"I didn't yarn to Pap when I told him I didn't own a deck," he said to Shorty. "Them wuzzent really our cards. I don't exactly know who they belonged to."

The good Deacon was still beset with the idea of astonishing the boys with a luxurious meal cooked by himself, without their aid, counsel or assistance. His failure the first time only made him the more determined. While he conceded that Si and Shorty did unusually well with the materials at their command, he had his full share of the conceit that possesses every man born of woman that, without any previous training or experience, he can prepare food better than anybody else who attempts to do it. It is usually conceded that there are three things which every man alive believes he can do better than the one who is engaged at it. These are:

1. Telling a story;
2. Poking a fire;
3. Managing a woman.

Cooking a meal should be made the fourth of this category.

One day Si and Shorty went with the rest of Co. Q on

fatigue duty on the enormous fortifications, the building of which took up so much of the Army of the Cumberland's energies during its stay around Murfreesboro' from Jan. 3 to June 24, 1863. Rosecrans seemed suddenly seized with McClellan's mania for spade work, and was piling up a large portion of Middle Tennessee into parapet, bastion and casemate, lunet, curtain, covered-way and gorge, according to the system of Vauban. The 200th Ind. had to do its unwilling share of this, and Si and Shorty worked off some of their superabundant energy with pick and shovel. They would come back at night tired, muddy and mad. They would be ready to quarrel with and abuse everybody and everything from President Lincoln down to the Commissary-Sergeant and the last issue of pickled beef and bread—especially the Commissary-Sergeant and the rations. The good Deacon sorrowed over these manifestations. He was intensely loyal. He wanted to see the soldiers satisfied with their officers and the provisions made for their comfort.

He would get up a good dinner for the boys, which would soothe their ruffled tempers and make them more satisfied with their lot.

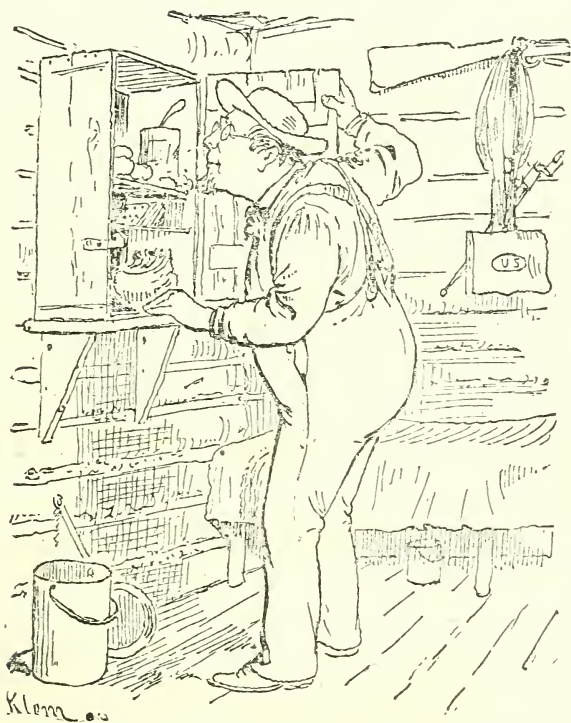
He began a labored planning of the feast. He looked over the larder, and found there pork, corned beef, potatoes, beans, coffee, brown sugar, and hardtack.

"Good, substantial vittles, that stick to the ribs," he muttered to himself, "and I'll fix up a good mess o' them. But the boys ought to have something of a treat once in a while, and I must think up some way to give it to 'em."

He pondered over the problem as he carefully cleaned the beans, and set them to boiling in a kettle over the fire. He washed some potatoes to put in the ashes and roast. But these were commonplace viands. He wanted something that would be luxuries.

"I recollect," he said to himself finally, "seein' a little

store, which some feller's set up a little ways from here. It's a board shanty, and I expect he's got a lot o' things in it that the boys 'd like, for there's nearly always a big crowd around it. I'll jest fasten up the house, and walk over there while the beans is a seethin', and see if I can't pick up something real good to eat."



DEACON KLEGG LOOKS OVER THE LARDER.

He made his way through the crowd, which seemed to him to smell of whisky, until he came to the shelf across the front, and took a look at the stock. It seemed almost wholly made up of canned goods, and boxes of half-Spanish cigars, and playing-cards

"Don't seem to be much of a store after all," soliloquized the Deacon, after he had surveyed the display. "Aint a patchin' to Ol Taylor's. Don't see anything very invitin' here. O, yes, there's a cheese. Say, Mister, gi' me about four pounds o' that there cheese."

"Plank down your \$2 fust, ole man," responded the storekeeper. "This is a cash store,—cash in advance, every time. Short credits make long friends. Hand me over your money, and I'll hand you over the cheese."

"Land o' Goshen, four bits a pound for cheese," gasped the Deacon. "Why, I kin git the best full-cream cheese at home for a bit a pound."

"Why don't you buy your cheese at home, then, ole man?" replied the storekeeper. "You'd make money, if you didn't have to pay freight to Murfreesboro'. Guess you don't know much about gettin' goods down to the front. But I haint no time to argy with you. If you don't want to buy, step back, and make room for someone that does. Business is lively this mornin'. Time is money. Small profits and quick returns, you know. No time to fool with loafers who only look on and ask questions."

"Strange way for a storekeeper to act," muttered the Deacon. "Must've bin brung up in a Land Office. He couldn't keep store in Posey County a week. They wouldn't stand his sass." Then aloud: "You may gi' me two pounds o' cheese."

"Well, why don't you plank down the rhino?" said the storekeeper impatiently. "Put up your money fust, and then you'll git the goods. This aint no credit concern with a stay-law attachment. Cash in advance saves bookkeeping."

"Well, I declare," muttered the Deacon, as he fished a greenback out of a leather pocket-book fastened with a

long strap. "This is the first time I ever had to pay for things before I got 'em.

"Never went to a circus, then, ole man, or run for office," replied the storekeeper, and his humor was rewarded with a roar of laughter. "Anything else? Speak quick or step back."

"I'll take a can o' them preserved peaches and a quart jug o' that genuine Injianny maple molasses," said the Deacon desperately, naming two articles which seemed much in demand.

"All right; \$2 for the peaches, and \$2 more for the molasses."

"Sakes alive!" ejaculated the Deacon, producing the strapped pocket-book again. "Five dollars gone, and precious little to show for it."

He took his jug and his can, and started back to the cabin. A couple of hundred yards away he met a squad of armed men marching toward the store, under the command of a Lieutenant. He stepped to one side to let them pass, but the Lieutenant halted them, and asked authoritatively:

"What have you got there, sir?"

"Jest some things I've been buyin' for the boys' dinner," answered the Deacon.

"Indeed! Very likely," remarked the Lieutenant sarcastically. He struck the jug so sharply with his sword that it was broken, and the air was filled with a powerful odor of whisky. The liquor splashed over the Deacon's trousers and wet them through. The expression of anger on his face gave way to one of horror. He had always been one of the most rigid of Temperance men, and fairly loathed whisky in all shapes and uses.

"Just as I supposed, you old vagabond," said the Lieutenant, contemptuously. "Down here sneaking whisky into camp. We'll stop that mighty sudden."

He knocked the can of peaches out of the Deacon's arms and ran his sword into it. A gush of whisky spurted out. The Sergeant took the package of cheese away and broke it open, revealing a small flask of liquor.

"The idea of a man of your age being engaged in such business," said the Lieutenant indignantly. "You ought to be helping to keep the men of the army sober, instead of corrupting them to their own great injury. You are doing them more harm than the rebels."

The Deacon was too astonished and angry to reply. Words utterly failed him in such a crisis.

"Take charge of him, Corporal," commanded the Lieutenant. "Put him in the guardhouse till to-morrow, when we'll drum him out of camp, with his partner, who is running that store."

The Corporal caught the Deacon by the arm roughly and pulled him to the rear of the squad, which hurried forward to the store. The crowd in front had an inkling of what was coming. In a twinkling of an eye they made a rush on the store, each man snatched a can or a jug, and began bolting away as fast as his legs could carry him.

The storekeeper ran out the back way, and tried to make his escape, but the Provost-Sergeant of the provost squad threw down his musket and took after him. The storekeeper ran fast, inspired by fear, and the desire to save his ill-gotten gains, but the Sergeant ran faster, and presently brought him back, panting and trembling, to witness the demolition of his property. The shanty was being torn down, each plank as it came off being snatched up by the soldiers to carry off and add to their own habitations. The "canned fruit" was being punched with bayonets, and the jugs smashed by gun-butts.

"You are a cheeky scoundrel," said the Lieutenant, addressing himself to the storekeeper, "to come down

here and try to run such a dead-fall right in the middle of camp. But we'll cure you of any such ideas as that. You'll find it won't pay at all to try such games on us. You'll go to the guardhouse, and to-morrow we'll shave your head and drum you and your partner there out of camp."

"I aint no partner o' his," protested the Deacon earnestly. "My name's Josiah Klegg, o' Posey County, Injianny. I'm down here on a visit to my son in the 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry. I'm a Deacon in the Baptist Church, and a Patriarch of the Sons o' Temperance. It'd be the last thing in the world I'd do to sell whisky."

"That story won't wash, old man," said the Lieutenant. "You were caught in the act, with the goods in your possession, and trying to deceive me."

He turned away to order the squad forward. As they marched along the storekeeper said to the Deacon.

"I'm afraid they've got me dead to rights, ole man, but you kin git out. Jest keep up your sanctimonious appearance and stick to your Deacon story, and you'll git off. I know of you. I've lived in Posey County myself. I'm going to trust you. I've already made a clean big profit on this venture, and I've got it right down in my pocket. In spite of all they've spiled, I'd be nigh \$500 ahead o' the game if I could git out o' camp with what I've got in my sock. But they'll probably search me and confiscate my wad for the hospital. You see, I've been through this thing before. I'm goin' to pass my pile over to you to take keer of till I'm through this rumpus. You play fair with me, an' I'll whack up with you fair and square, dollar for dollar. If you don't I'll follow you for years."

"I wouldn't tech a dirty dollar of yours for the world,"

said the Deacon indignantly; but this was lost on the storekeeper, who was watching the Lieutenant.

"Don't say a word," he whispered; "he's got his eye on us. There it is in your overcoat pocket."

In the meantime they had arrived at the guardhouse. The Sergeant stepped back, took the storekeeper roughly by the shoulders, and shoved him up in front of a tall, magisterial-looking man wearing a Captain's straps, who stood frowning before the door.

"Search him," said the Captain briefly.

The Sergeant went through the storekeeper's pockets with a deftness that bespoke experience. He produced a small amount of money, some of it in fractional currency and Confederate notes, a number of papers, a plug of tobacco, and some other articles. He handed these to the Captain, who hastily looked over them, handed back the tobacco and other things and the small change.

"Give these back to him," he said briefly. "Turn the rest of the money over to the hospital fund. Where's our barber? Shave his head, call up the fifers and drummers, and drum him out of camp at once. I haven't time to waste on him."

Before he had done speaking the guards had the storekeeper seated on a log, and were shearing his hair.

"General," shouted the Deacon.

"That's a Capain, you fool," said one of the guards.

"Captain, then," yelled the Deacon.

"Who is that man?" asked the Cap'ain severely.

"He's his partner," said the Lieutenant.

"Serve him the same way," said the Captain shortly, turning to go.

The Deacon's knees smote together. He, a Deacon of the Baptist Church, and a man of stainless repute at home, to have his head shaved and drummed out of

camp. He would rather die at once. The guards had laid hands on him.

"Captain," he yelled again, "it's all a horrible mistake. I had nothin' to do with this man."

"Talk to the Lieutenant, there," said the Captain, moving off. "He will attend to you."

The Lieutenant was attentively watching the barbering operation. "Cut it close—closer yet," he admonished the barber.

"Lieutenant! Lieutenant!" pleaded the Deacon, awkwardly saluting.

"Stand back; I'll attend to you next," said the Lieutenant impatiently. "Now, tie his hands behind him."

The Lieutenant turned toward the Deacon, and the barber picked up his shears and made a step in that direction. Just in the extremity of his danger the Deacon caught sight of the Captain of Co. Q walking toward Headquarters.

"Capt. McGillicuddy! Capt. McGillicuddy! come here at once! Come quick!" he called in a voice which had been trained to long-distance work on the Wabash bottoms.

Capt. McGillicuddy looked up, recognized the waving of the Deacon's bandana, and hastened thither. Fortunately he knew the Provost officers, there were explanations all around, and profuse apologies, and just as the fifes and drums struck up the "Rogue's March" behind the luckless storekeeper, who had to step off in front of a line of leveled bayonets, the Deacon walked away arm-in-arm with the Captain.

"I'm not goin' to let go o' you till I'm safe back in our own place," he said. "My gracious! think of havin' my head shaved and marched off the way that feller's bein'."

He walked into the cabin and stirred up the beans.

"The water's biled off," said he to himself, "but they

haint been in nigh as hot a place as I have. I guess the boys'll have to do with a plain dinner to day. I'm not goin' to stir out o' this place agin unless they're with me."

He put his hand into his pocket for his bandana and felt the roll of bills, which he had altogether forgotten in his excitement.

His face was a study.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DEACON TROUBLED WITH A QUESTION OF CONSCIENCE.
HE ALSO GOES OUT WITH A FORAGING PARTY.

From the door of the cabin the Deacon could see the fort on which the boys were piling up endless cubic yards of the red soil of Tennessee. As he watched them, with an occasional glance at the beans seething in the kettle, fond memories rose of a woman far away on the Wabash who these many years had thought and labored for his comfort in their home, while he labored within her sight on their farm. It was the first time in their long married life that he had been away from her for such a length of time.

"I believe I'm gittin' real homesick to see Mariar," he said with a sigh. "I'd give a good deal for a letter from her. I do hope everything on the farm's all right. I think it is. I'm a little worried about Brown Susy, the mare, but I think she'll pick up as the weather settles. I hope her fool colt, that I've give Si, won't break his leg nor nothin' while I'm away."

Presently he saw the men quit work, and he turned to get ready for the boys. He covered the rough table with newspapers to do duty for a cloth, he had previously scoured up the tinware to its utmost brightness and cleanliness, and while the boys were washing off the accumulations of clay, and liberally denouncing the man who invented fort building, and even West Point for educating men to pursue the nefarious art, he dished out the smoking viands.

"Upon my word, Pap," said Si, as he helped himself liberally, "you do beat us cookin' all holler. Your beans

taste almost as good as mother's. We must git you to give us some lessons."

"Yes; you're a boss cook," said Shorty, with his mouth full. "Better not let Gen. Rosecrans find out how well you kin bile beans, or he'll have you drafted, and keep you with him till the end o' the war."

After supper they lighted their pipes and seated themselves in front of the fire.

"How'd you git along to-day, Pap?" asked Si. "I hope you didn't have no trouble?"

The Deacon took his pipe out of his mouth, blew a cloud of smoke, and considered a moment before replying. He did not want to recount his experiences, at least, until he had digested them more thoroughly. He was airaid of the joking of the boys, and still more that the story would get back home. Then, he was still sorely perplexed about the disposition of the money. He had not thought that out yet, by a great deal. But the question was plump and direct, and concealment and untruth were alike absolutely foreign to his nature. After a minute's pause he decided to tell the whole story.

"Well, boys," he began with a shamefaced look, "I had the flamboyantest racket to-day I've had yit."

The two boys took their pipes out and regarded him with surprise.

"Yes," continued he, with a deep sigh, "it laid away over my gittin' down here, and my night in the guard-house, even. You see, after you went away I began to think about gittin' up something a little extry for you to eat. I thought about it for awhile, and then recollected seeing a little grocery that'd been set up nigh here in a board shanty."

"Yes, we know about it," said Shorty, exchanging a look with Si.

"Well," continued the Deacon, "I concluded that I'd

jest slip over there, and mebbe I could find something that'd give variety to your pork and beans. He didn't seem to have much but canned goods, and his prices wuz jest awful. But I wuz determined to git something, and I finally bought a jug o' genuine Injianny maple molasses, a chunk o' cheese, and a can o' peaches. I



"HIT MY JUG A WELT WITH HIS SWORD."

had to pay him \$5 for it. He said he had to charge high on account o' freight rates, and I remembered that I had some trouble in gittin' things down here, and so I paid him. He wuz very peart and sassy, and it was take-it-or-leave-it-and-be-plaguey-quick-about-it all the time. But I paid my \$5, gathered the things up, and started

back to the house. I hadn't got more'n 100 rods away when I met one o' these officers with only one o' them things in his shoulder straps"—

"A First Lieutenant," interjected Si.

"Yes, they called him a Lieutenant. He spoke very bossy and cross to me, and hit my jug a welt with his sword. He broke it, and what do you suppose was in it?"

"Whisky," said Si and Shorty simultaneously, with a shout of laughter.

"That's jest what it wuz. I wuz never so mortified in my life. I couldn't say a word. The Lieutenant abused me for being a partner in sellin' whisky to the soldiers—me, Josiah Klegg, Patriarch of the Sons o' Temperance, and a Deacon. While I wuz tryin' to tell him this he jabbed his sword into the can o' peaches, and what do you suppose was in that?"

"Whisky," yelled Si and Shorty, with another burst of laughter.

"That's jest what it wuz. Then one o' the Lieutenant's men jerked the chunk o' cheese away and broke it open. And what do you suppose was in that?"

"Whisky, of course," yelled the boys in uncontrollable mirth.

"That's jest what it wuz. I wuz so dumbfounded that I couldn't say a word. They yanked me around in behind the squad, and told me they'd shave my head and drum me out o' camp. The Lieutenant took his men up to the grocery and tore it down, and ketched the feller that wuz keepin' it. They put him alongside o' me, and tuk us up to the guardhouse. On the way he whispered to me that they wuz likely to salt him, 'cause they knowed him, but I'd likely git off easy. He'd made \$500 clean out o' the business already, and had it in his clothes. He'd pass it over to me to keep till the racket wuz over, when he'd divide fair and square with me. I

told him that I'd rather burn my hand off than tech a dirty dollar o' his money, but he dropt it into my overcoat pocket all the same, and I wuz so excited that I clean forgot all about it, and brung it away with me. When we got to the guardhouse they tuk all the rest of his money away, shaved his head, and drummed him out o' camp."

"Yes, we saw that," said Si; "but didn't pay no attention to it. They're drummin' some feller out o' camp nearly every day, for something or other.

"I don't see that it does any good," said Shorty. "It'd be a heap better to set 'em to work on the fortifications. That'd take the deviltry out o' 'em."

"When they'd got through with him," continued the Deacon, "they turned their attention to me. I never wuz so scared in all my born days. But luckily, jest in the nick o' time, I ketched sight o' Capt. McGillicuddy, and hollered to him. He come up and explained things, and they let me go, with lots o' apologies. When I got back to the house, I felt for my handkerchief, and found that scalawag's roll o' bills, which I'd clean forgot. Here it is."

He pulled out a fat roll of crisp greenbacks. Si took them, thumbed them over admiringly, counted them, and handed them to Shorty, who did the same.

"Yes, there's over \$500 there," said Si. "What are you goin' to do with it, Pap?"

"That's jest what's worrying the life out o' me," answered his father. "By rights I ought to throw the condemned stuff into the fire, only I hold it a great sin to destroy property of any kind."

"What, burn all that good money up?" said Shorty with a whistle. "You don't live in an insane asylum when you're at home, do you?"

"'Twouldn't be right to burn it, Pap," said Si, who bet-

ter understood the rigidity of his father's principles. "It'd do a mighty sight o' good somewhere."

"The money don't belong at all to that feller," mused the Deacon. "A man can't have no property in likker. It's wet damnation, hell's broth, to nourish murderers, thieves, and paupers. It is the devil's essence, with



"PULLED OUT A FAT ROLL OF GREENBACKS."

which he makes widows and orphans. Every dollar of it is minted with women's tears and children's cries of hunger. That feller got the money by violatin' the law on the one hand and swindling the soldiers on the other, and corruptin' them to their ruin. To give the money back to him would be rewardin' him for his rascality.

It'd be like givin' a thief his booty, or a burglar his plunder, and make me his pardner."

"You're right there, Pap," assented Si. "You'd jest be settin' him up in business in some other stand. Five hundred dollars'd give him a good start. His hair'll soon grow agin."

"The worst of it," sighed Shorty, "is that it an't good likker. Otherwise it'd be different. But it's pizener than milk-sick or loco-weed. It's aqua-fortis, fish-berries, tobacco juice and ratsbane. That stuff'd eat a hole in a tin pan."

"The Captain turned the rest o' his money over to the hospital," continued the Deacon. "I might do that."

"Never do in the world, Pap," protested Si. "Better burn it up at once. It'd be the next worst thing to givin' it back to him. It'd jest be pamperin' and encouragin' a lot o' galoots that lay around the hospitals to keep out o' fights. None o' the wounded or really sick'd git the benefit of a cent of it. They wuz all sent away weeks ago to Nashville, Louisville, and back home. You jest ought to see that bummer gang. Last week me and Shorty wuz on fatigue duty down by one o' the hospitals. There wuzzent nobody in the hospital but a few 'shell-fever' shirks, who're too lazy to work on the fortifications, and we saw a crowd of civilians and men in uniform set down to a finer dinner than you kin git in any hotel. Shorty wanted to light some shells and roll in amongst 'em, but I knowed that it'd jest make a muss that we'd have to clean up afterward."

"But what am I goin' to do with it?" asked the Deacon despairingly. "I don't want no money in my hands that don't belong to me, and especially sich money as that, which seems to have a curse to every bill. If we could only find out the men he tuk it from"—

"Be about as easy as drivin' a load o' hay back into

the field, and fitting each spear o' grass back on the stalk from which it was cut," interjected Shorty.

"Or I might send it anonymously to the Baptist Board o' Missions," continued the Deacon.

"Nice way to treat the little heathens," objected Si. "Send them likker money."

The Deacon groaned.

"Tell you what we might do, Pap," said Si, as a bright idea struck him. "There's a widder, a Union woman, jest outside the lines, whose house wuz burned down by the rebels. She could build a splendid new house with \$100—better'n the one she wuz livin' in before. Send her \$100."

"Not a bad idee," said the Deacon approvingly, as he poked the ashes down in his pipe with his little finger.

"And Pap," continued Si, encouraged by the reception of this suggestion, "there's poor Bill Ellerlee, who lost his leg in the fight. He used to drink awful hard, and most of his money went down his throat. He's got a wife and two small children, and they hain't a cent to live on, except what the neighbors gives. Why not put up \$200 in an express package and send it to him, marked 'from an unknown friend'?"

"Good," accorded the Deacon.

"And Jim Pocock," put in Shorty, seeing the drift. "He's gone home with a bullet through his breast. His ~~children~~ are pretty poor. Why not send him \$100 the same way?"

"Excellent idee," said the father.

"That leaves \$100 yit," said Si. "If you care to, you kin divide it between Shorty and me, and we'll use it among the boys that got hurt, and need something."

A dubious look came into the Deacon's face.

"You needn't be afeard of us, Pap," said Si, with a little

blush. "I kin promise you that we won't use a cent ourselves, but give every bit where it is really needed."

"I believe you, my son," said the Deacon heartily. "We'll do jest as you say."

They spent the evening carrying their plan into execution.

At the 9 o'clock roll-call the Orderly-Sergeant announced:

"Co. Q to go out with a forage-train to-morrow morning.

This was joyful news—a delightful variation from the toil on the fortifications. "Taps" found everybody getting his gun and traps ready for an excursion into the country.

"You'd like to go with us, Pap, wouldn't you?" asked Si, as he looked over his cartridge-box to see what it contained.

"Indeed I would," replied the father. "I'll go anywhere with you rather than spend such another day in camp. You don't think you will see any rebels, do you?" he asked rather nervously.

"Don't know; never kin tell," said Shorty oracularly. "Rebels is anywhere you find 'em. Sometimes they're seldomer than a chaw of terbacker in a Sunday-school. You can't find one in a whole County. Then, first thing you know, they're thicker'n fleas on a dog's back. But we won't likely see no rebels to-morrow. There ain't no great passel o' them this side o' Duck River. Still, we'll take our guns along, jest like a man wears a breast-pin on a dark night, because he's used to it."

"Can't you git me a gun, too? I think it'd be company for me," said the Deacon.

"Certainly," said Si.

The Deacon stowed himself in the wagons with the rest the next morning, and rode out with them through the bright sunshine, that gave promise of the soon on-

coming of Spring. For miles they jolted over the execrable roads and through the shiftless, run-down country before they found anything worth while putting in the wagons.

"Great country, Pap," said Si suggestively.

"Yes; it'd be a great country," said his father disdainfully, "if you could put a wagonload o' manure on every foot and import some Injianny men to take care of it. The water and the sunshine down here seem all right, but the land and the people and the pigs and stock seem to be cullins throwed out when they made Injianny."

At length the train halted by a double log house of much more pretentious character than any they had so far seen. There were a couple of well-lled corn-cribs, a large stack of fodder, and other evidences of plenty. The Deacon's practiced eye noticed that there was no stock in the fields, but Si explained this by saying that everything on hoofs had been driven off to supply the rebel army. "They're now trying to git a corn-crib and a fodder-stack with four legs, but hain't succeeded so far."

The Captain ordered the fence thrown down and the wagons driven in to be filled. The surrounding horizon was scanned for signs of rebels, but none appeared anywhere. The landscape was as tranquil, as peace-breathing as a Spring morning on the Wabash, and the Deacon's mind reverted to the condition of things on his farm. It was too wet to plow, but he would like to take a walk over the fields and see how his wheat had come out, and look over the peach-buds and ascertain how they had stood the Winter. He noticed how some service-trees, had already unfolded their white petals, like flags of truce breaking the long array of green cedars and rusty-brown oaks.

The company stacked arms in the road, the Captain went to direct the filling of the wagons, and Si and

Shorty started on a private reconnoissance for something for their larder.

The Deacon strolled around the yard for awhile inspecting the buildings and farm implements with an eye of professional curiosity, and arrived at very unfavorable opinions. He then walked up on the porch of the house, where a woman of about his own age sat in a split-bottomed rocking-chair knitting and viewing the proceedings with frowning eyes.

"Good day, ma'am," said he. "Warm day, ma'am."

"Taint as warm as it orter be for sich fellers as yo'uns, she snapped. "You'd be in the brimstone pit if you had your desserts."

The Deacon always tried to be goodhumored with an angry woman, and he thought he would try the effect of a little pleasantry. "I'm a Baptist, ma'am, and they say us Baptists are tryin' to put out that fire with cold water."

"You a Babtist?" she answered scornfully. "The hot place is full o' jest sich Babtists as yo'uns air, and they're making room for more. We'uns air Babtists ourselves, but, thank the Lord, not o' your kind. Babtists air honest people. Babtists don't go about the country robbin' and murderin' and stealin' folkses' corn. Don't tell me you air a Babtist, for I know you air a-lyin', and that's the next thing to killin' and stealin'."

"But I am a Baptist," persisted the Deacon, "and have bin for 30 year—regular, free-will, close-communion, total-immersion Baptist. We have some Campbellites, a few Six Principle Baptists, and some Hard Shells, but the heft of us air jest plain, straight-out Baptists. But, speakin' o' cold water, kin you give me a drink? I'm powerful dry."

"Thar's water down in the crick, thar," she said, with a motion of her knitting in that direction. "It's as fur

for me as it is for you. Go down thar and drink all you like. Lucky you can't carry the crick away with yo'uns. Yo'uns 'd steal it if yo'uns could."

"You don't seem to be in a good humor, ma'am," said the Deacon, maintaining his pleasant demeanor and tone.

"Well, if you think that a passel o' nasty Yankees is kalkerlated to put a lady in a good humor you're even a bigger fool than you look. But I haint no time to waste jawin' you. If you want a drink thar's the crick. Go and drink your fill of it. I only wish it was a's'nic, to pizen you and your whole army."

She suddenly stopped knitting, and bent her eyes eagerly on an opening in the woods on a hill-top whence the road wound down to the house. The Deacon's eyes followed hers, and he saw unmistakable signs of men in butternut clothes. The woman saw that he noticed them, and her manner changed.

"Come inside the house," she said pleasantly, "and I'll git you a gourdful o' water fresh from the spring."

"Thankee, ma'am; I don't feel a bit dry," answered the Deacon, with his eyes fastened on the hill-top. "Si, Shorty, Capt. McGillicuddy," he yelled.

"Shet your head, and come into the house this minute, you nasty Yankee, or I'll slash your fool head off," ordered the woman, picking up a corn-cutter which lay on the porch, and starting for him.

The Deacon was inside the railing around the porch, and he had not jumped a fence for 20 years. But he cleared the railing as neatly as Si could have done it, and ran bareheaded down the road, yelling at the top of his voice.

He was not a minute too soon—not soon enough. A full company of rebel cavalry came dashing down out of the woods, yelling like demons

Without waiting to form, the men of Co. Q ran to their guns and began firing from fence-corners and behind trees. Capt. McGillicuddy took the first squad that he came to and, running forward a little way, made a hasty line and opened fire. Others saw the advantage of the position and ran up to him.

The Deacon snatched up a gun and joined the Captain.

"I never wuz subject to the 'buck fever,'" he muttered to himself, "and I won't allow myself to be now. I remember jest how Jeneral Jackson told his men to shoot down to New Orleans. I'm going to salt one o' them fellers as sure as my name's Josiah Klegg."

He took a long breath, to steady himself, as he joined the Captain, picked out a man on a bay horse that seemed to be the rebels' Captain, and caught his breast fully through the hindsight before he pulled the trigger. Through the smoke he saw his man tumble from his horse.

"Got him, anyway," he muttered; "now, how in the world kin I load this plaguey gun agin?"

At that instant a rebel bullet bit a piece out of his ear, but he paid no attention to it.

"Gi' me that cartridge," he said to a man next to him, who had just bitten off the end of one; "I can't do it."

The man handed him the cartridge, which the Deacon rammed home, but before he could find a cap the fight was over, and the rebels were seeking the shelter of the woods.

The Deacon managed to get a cap on his gun in time to take a long-distance, ineffective shot at the rebels as they disappeared in the woods.

They hastily buried one rebel who had been killed, and picked up those who had been wounded and carried them into the house, where they were made as comfortable

as possible. Among them was the man whom the Deacon had aimed at. He was found to have a wound through the fleshy part of his hip, and proved to be the son of the woman of the house.

As soon as the fight was over Si, full of solicitude, sought his father. He found him wiping the blood from his ear with his bandana.

"It's nothin', son; absolutely nothin'," said the old gentleman with as much pride as any recruit. "Don't hurt as much as a scratch from a briar. Some feller what couldn't write put his mark on me so's he'd know me agin. But I fetched that feller on the bay hoss. I'm glad I didn't kill him, but he'll keep out o' devilment for sometime.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEACON CARRIES OUT THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

"Pap," said Si, as they were riding back, comfortably seated on a load of corn-fodder, "now that it's all over, I'm awfully scared about you. I can't forgive myself for runnin' you up agin such a scrape. I hadn't no idee that there wuz a rebel in the whole County. If anything had happened you it'd just killed mother and the girls, and then I'd never rested till I got shot myself, for I wouldn't've wanted to live a minute."

"Pshaw, my son," responded his father rather testily; "you ain't my gardeen, and I hope it'll be a good many years yit before you are. I'm mighty glad that I went. There was something Providential in it. I'm a good deal of a Quaker. I believe in the movin's of the Spirit. The spirit moved me very strongly to go with you, and I now see the purpose in it. If I hadn't, them fellers might've got the bulge on you. I seen them before any o' you did, and I fetched down their head devil, and I feel that I helped you a good deal."

"Indeed you did," said Shorty earnestly. "You ought to have a brevet for your 'conspicuous gallantry in action.' I think the Colonel will give you one. You put an ounce o' lead to particularly good use in that feller's karkiss. I only wish it'd bin a little higher up, where it'd a-measured him for a wooden overcoat."

"I'm awful glad I hit him jest where I did," responded the Deacon. "I did have his heart covered with my sights, and then I pulled down a little. He was pizen, I know; but I wanted to give him a chance to repent."

"He'll repent a heap," said Shorty incredulously. "He'll lay around the house for the next six months, studyin' up new deviltry, and what he can't think of that she-cesh mother o' his'll put him up to. Co. Q, and particularly the Hoosier's Rest, is the only place you'll find a contrite heart and a Christian spirit cultivated."

"That reminds me," said Si; "we haint licked the Wagonmaster yit for throwin' cartridges down our chimbley."

"Blamed if that ain't so," said Shorty. "I knowed I'd forgotten some little thing. It's bin hauntin' my mind for days. I'll jest tie a knot in my handkerchief to remember that I must tend to that as soon's we git back."

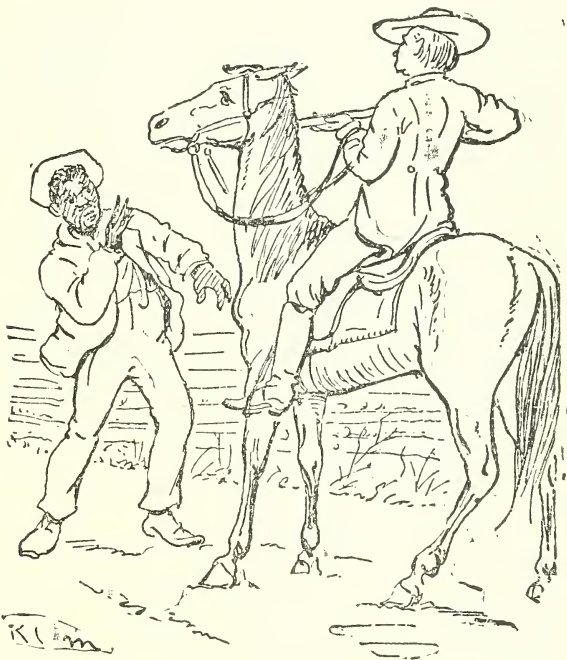
"I'm quite sure that I don't want another sich a tussle, meditated the Deacon. "I never heerd anything sound so murder'n' wicked as them bullets. A painter's screech on a dark night or a rattler's rattle wuzzent to be compared to 'em. It makes my blood run cold to think o' 'em. Then, if that feller that shot at me had wobbled his gun a little to the left, Josiah Klegg's name would 've bin sculpted on a slab o' white marble, and Maria would 've bin the Widder Klegg. I wish the war wuz over, and Si and Shorty safe at home. But their giddy young pates are so full o' dumb'd nonsense that there haint no room for scare. But, now that I'm safe through it, I wouldn't 've missed it for the best cow on my place. After all, Providence sends men where they are needed, and He certainly sent me out there.

"Then, I'll have a good story to tell the brethren and sisters some night after prayer meetin's over. It'll completely offset that story 'bout my comin' so near gittin' my head shaved. How the ungodly rapscaillions would've gloated over Deacon Klegg's havin' his head shaved an' bein' drummed out o' camp. That thing makes me shiver worse'n the whistlin' o' them awful bullets. But

they can't say nothin' now. Deacon Klegg's bin a credit to the church."

They were nearing camp. The Captain of Co. Q ordered:

"Corporal Klegg, take your wagon up that right-hand road to the Quartermaster's corral of mules, and bring me a receipt for it."



"I'M GWINE TER KILL YE, RIGHT HERE."

Si turned the wagon off, and had gone but a few hundred yards, when he and Shorty saw a house at a little distance, which seemed to promise to furnish something eatable. He and Shorty jumped off and cut across the fields toward it, telling the Deacon they would rejoin him before he reached the picket-line, a mile or so ahead.

The Deacon jogged on, musing intently of the stirring

events of the day, until he was recalled to the things immediately around him by hearing a loud voice shout:

"Stop, there, you black scoundrel! I've ketched ye. I'm gwine to blow your ornery head off!"

He looked up and saw a man about his own age, dressed in butternut homespun, and riding a fine horse. He wore a broad-brimmed slouch hat, his clean-shaven face was cold and cruel, and he had leveled a double-barreled shotgun on a fine-looking negro, who had leaped over from the field into the middle of the road, and was standing there regarding him with a look of intense disappointment and fear.

"You devil's ape," continued the white man, with a torrent of profanity, "I've ketched ye jest in the nick o' time. Ye wuz makin' for the Yankee camp, and 'd almost got thar. Ye thought yer 40 acres and a mule wuz jest in sight, did ye? Mebbe ye reckoned y'd git a white wife, and be an officer in the Yankee army. I'm gwine to kill ye, right here, to stop yer deviltry, and skeer off others that air o' the same mind."

"Pray God, don't kill me, massa," begged the negro. "I hain't done nuffin' to be killed foh."

"Haint done nothin' to be killed for!" shouted the white man, with more oaths. "Do ye call sneakin' off to jine the enemy and settin' an example to the other niggers nothin'? Git down on yer knees and say yer prayers, if ye know any, for ye aint a minnit to live."

The trembling negro dropped to his knees and began mumbling his prayers.

"What's the ~~matter~~ there?" asked the Deacon of the teamster.

"O, some man's ketched his nigger tryin' to run away to our fines, and's goin' to kill him," answered the teamster indifferently.

"Goin' to kill him," gasped the Deacon. "Are we goin' to 'low that?"

"'Taint none o' my business," said the teamster coolly. "It's his nigger; I reckon he's a right to do as he pleases."



"SAY, YOU; WHAT ARE YOU GOIN' TER DO WITH THAT MAN?"

"I don't reckon nothin' o' the kind," said the Deacon indignantly. "I won't stand and see it done."

"Better not mix in," admonished the teamster. "'Them air Southerners is pretty savage folks, and don't like any meddlin' twixt them and their niggers. What's a nigger, anyway?"

"Amounts to about as much as a whitelivered teamster," said the Deacon hotly. "I'm goin' to mix in. I'll not see any man murdered while I'm around. Say, you,"

to the white man; "what are you goin' tor do with that man?"

"Mind yer own bizniss," replied the white man, after a casual glance at the Deacon, and seeing that he did not wear a uniform. "Keep yer mouth shet if ye know when y're well off."

"O, massa, save me! save me!" said the negro, jumping up and running toward the Deacon, who had slipped down from the fodder, and was standing in the road.

"All right, Sambo; don't be scared. He shan't kill you while I'm around," said the Deacon.

"I tell ye agin to mind yer own bizniss and keep yer mouth shet," said the white man savagely. "Who air ye, anyway? One o' them slinkin' nigger-stealin' Abolitionists, comin' down here to rob us Southerners of our property?"

He followed this with a torrent of profane denunciation of the "whole vile Abolition crew."

"Look here, Mister," said the Deacon calmly, reaching back into the wagon and drawing out a musket, "I'm a member o' the church and a peaceable man. But I don't 'low no man to call me names, and I object to swearin' of all kinds. I want to argy this question with you, quietly, as between man and man."

He looked down to see if there was a cap on the gun.

"What's the trouble 'twixt you and this man here?"

"That ain't no man," said the other hotly. "That's my nigger—bought with my money. He's my property. I've ketched him tryin' to run away—tryin' to rob me of \$1,200 worth o' property and give it to our enemies. I'm gwine to kill him to stop others from doin' the same thing."

"Indeed you're not," said the Deacon, putting his thumb on the hammer.

"Do ye mean to say you'll stop me?" said the master,

starting to raise his shotgun, which he had let fall a little.

"Something like that, if not the exact words," answered the Deacon calmly, looking at the sights of the musket with an interested air.

The master resumed his volley of epithets.

The Deacon's face became very rigid, and the musket was advanced to a more threatening position. "I told you before," he said, "that I didn't allow no man to call me sich names. I give you warnin' agin. I'm liable to fall from grace, as the Methodists say, any minnit. I'm dumbbed sure to if you call me another name."

The master glared at the musket. It was clearly in hands used to guns, and the face behind it was not that of a man to be fooled with beyond a certain limit. He lowered his shotgun, and spoke sharply to the negro:

"Sam, git 'round here in front of the hoss, and put for home at once."

"Shall I go, mass'r?" implored the negro anxiously. "He'll done kill me, sho'."

"Stay where you are, till I finish' talkin' to this man," commanded the Deacon. "Are you a loyal man?" he inquired of the master.

"If ye mean loil to that rail-splittin' gorilla in Washington," replied the master, hotly; "to that low-down, nigger-lovin', nigger-stealin'"——

"Shet right up," said the Deacon, bringing up his gun in a flash of anger. "You shan't abuse the President o' the United States any more'n you shall me, nor haif so much. He's your President, whom you must honor and respect. I won't have him blackguarded by an unhung rebel. You say yourself you're a rebel. Then you have no right whatever to this man, and I'm goin' to confiscate him in the name of Abraham Lincoln, President o' the United States, an' accordin' to his proclamation of

emancipation, done at Washington, District o' Columbia, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty-three and of our Independence the 87th."

This was as near the legal formula for such an important act as the Deacon could think of at the moment. He followed it up by an order not nearly so sonorous, but quite to the point:

"Now, you jest turn your hoss around and vacate these parts as quick as you can, and leave me and this colored man alone. We're tired o' havin' you 'round."

The master was a man of sense. He knew that there was nothing to do but obey.

CHAPTER XXI.

THERE IS SOME TROUBLE AS TO WHAT TO DO WITH THE
FREEDMAN.

"What is ye a-gwine tuh do wid me, mas'r?" asked the negro, with a look and an attitude curiously like a forlorn stray dog which had at last found an owner and protector.

"Wish to gracious I knowed," answered the Deacon, knitting his brows in thought. "I don't know as I've anything to do with you. I've about as much idee what to do with you as I would with a whale in the Wabash River. I'm neither John Brown nor a colonization society. I've about as much use for a nigger, free or slave, as a frog has for a tail. You're free now—that's all there is of it. Nobody's got nothin' to do with you. You've got to do with yourself—that's all. You're your own master. You go your way and let other folks go theirs."

In the simplicity of his heart the Deacon thought he had covered the whole ground. What more could the man want, who had youth, health and strength, than perfect liberty to go where he pleased and strive for what he wanted?

The negro looked dazed and perplexed.

"Isn't yo' a-gwine tuh take me wid yo', mas'r?" he asked.

"Take you with me!" repeated the Deacon in astonishment and some petulance. "Certainly not. I den't want you. And you mustn't call me master. You mustn't call any man master. You're no longer a slave. You're your own master. You're free; don't you understand?"

"But whah'm I tuh go?" reiterated the negro hopelessly.

"Go where you please," repeated the Deacon with impatience. "The whole world's open to you. Go to the next County; go to Kaintucky, Injianny, Ohio, Illinoy, Kamskatky, New Guiney, Jericho, or Polkinhorn's tanyard if you like."

"Afo' God, I don't know what tuh do, or wha tuh go," said the negro despairingly. "If yo' leab me here, I know dat ole mas'r 'll fin' me an' done kill me daid."

"Niggers is like mules," remarked Groundhog sagely. "They only know two places in the whole world: their master's place and somewhere else. They want to run away from their master, but they haint nary idee whar to go when they run away. A hoss has more sense 'n either a nigger or a mule. When he lights out he's got some idee o' where he wants t' go. I tell you; jest give that nigger to me. I know what to do with him. I know a man that'll give me \$100 for him, and I'll whack up fair and square with you."

"Shut up, you mullet-headed mule-whacker," said the Deacon irritably. "You haint got sense enough to take care o' mules right, let alone a man. I wouldn't trust you an hour with the poorest team on my place. I'll take care o' this man myself, at least, until I kin have a talk with the boys. Here, you nigger, what's your name?"

"Dey call me Sam, mas'r," replied the negro.

"Well, we'll ehange that. You're a free man, and I'll give you another name. I'm goin' to call you Abraham—Abraham Lincoln—the grandest name in the world to-day. For short I'll call you Abe. You must stop callin' me, or anybody, master, I tell you. You just call me Mister Klegg."

"Mistuh—what?" said the negro, puzzled.

"Well, jes' call me boss. Now, Abe, climb up into the wagon here, and come along with me."

"He can't git into no wagon o' mine," said the teamster

surlily. "Government wagons ain't no passenger coaches for runaway niggers. I didn't hire to haul niggers on pleasure excursions. That ain't no part of a white man's bizness. Let him walk alongside."

"You dumbbed citizen," said the Deacon angrily. He had been in camp long enough to catch the feeling of the men toward the Quartermaster's civilian employees.



"DO YOU HEAR? GIT ON YOUR MULE AT ONCE!"

"This man shall ride in this wagon alongside o' me, and you'll drive us into camp, or I'll find out the reason why. Now jest gether up your lines and start."

"I won't take no slack from no old Wabash hayseed like you," responded the teamster cordially. "You can't loss me. You hain't no right. You can't ring me in to

help you steal niggers, unless you divide with me. You come out here in the road and I'll punch that old sorrel-top head o' your'n."

And the teamster pranced out and brandished his blacksnake whip menacingly.

It had been many years since anybody on the Wabash had dared Deacon Klegg to a match in fisticuffs. The memory of some youthful performances of his had secured him respectful immunity. His last affair had been a severe suppression of a noted bully who attempted to "crowd the mourners" at a camp-meeting for the good order of which the Deacon felt himself somewhat responsible. It took the bully fully six months to get over it, and he went to the mourner's bench himself at the next revival.

The Deacon looked at the gesticulating teamster a minute, and the dormant impulse of his youth stirred again within him. He laid his gun down, and calmly slid from the fodder to the ground. He pulled off his coat and hat, and laid them on the wagon. He took the quid of tobacco from his mouth, carefully selected a place for it on the edge of the wagon-bed, laid it there on a piece of corn-husk, and walked toward the teamster, rolling up his sleeves.

The effect upon the monarch of the mules was immediate and marked. He stopped prancing around, and began to look alarmed.

"Now, don't you hit me," he yelled. "I'm the driver o' this team, and in Gov'ment employ. If you hit me I'll have you courtmartialed."

"I'm not goin' to hit you," said the Deacon, raising a fist as big as a small ham, "if you behave yourself. I want you to shut your mouth, and git on your mule and start for camp. If you don't 'tend to your bizness, or

give me any more o' your sass, I'll pound the melt out o' you. D' you hear? Git on your mule at onct."

The teamster did as he was bid, and without further discussion of the civil rights of freedmen on Government transports, drove on till they came up to where the boys were sitting on a fence-corner waiting for them.



"THE BOYS WERE SITTING ON A FENCE-CORNER WAITING FOR THEM."

Si had a brace of chickens tied together by the feet, and Shorty a crock of honey in the comb, with a bag of saleratus biscuits and one of cornmeal, and a number of strings of dried apples.

"Bin waitin' for you a good while, Pap. What kep' you 'o long? Break-down?" said Si.

"No; had to stop and argy the fugitive slave law with a Southern gentleman, and then debate niggers' civil rights with the teamster," said the Deacon. Then he told them the story. "Here's the darky," he said, as he concluded. "Seems to be a purty fair sort of a farm-hand, if he has sense enough to come in when it rains, which I misdoubt. I don't know what in the world to do with him. But I brung him along, till I could talk with you boys, because if I'd left him out there that old snoozer with a shotgun'd made dead meat out o' him. What are we goin' to do with him?"

"Do with him?" said Shorty. "Do everything with him. Take him into camp first. Hire him out to the Quartermaster. Let him wait on the Captain. Take him back home with you to help on the farm while Si's away. Jehosephat, a big buck like that's a mighty handy thing to have about the house. You kin learn him more tricks in a week than he'd learn with his owner in a lifetime. "Say, boy, what's your name?"

"S—s-s," the negro began to say, but he caught the Deacon's eye upon him, and responded promptly, "Abr'm Lincoln."

"I believe the nigger kin be taught," thought the Deacon. "Probably this's some more o' Providence's workin's. Mebbe He brung this about jest to give me my share o' the work o' raisin the fallen race."

"Boys," said he, "I'm glad you've got something good to eat there. Them chickens seem tol'ble young and fat. I hope you came by 'em honestly."

"Well, Pap," chuckled Si, "I don't know as a man who's been gunnin' around for another man's nigger, and got him, is jest in shape to ask questions how other men got chickens and things; but I'll relieve your mind by sayin' that we came honestly by 'em."

"Yes; thought it would be interestin' to try that way

once, for a change," said Shorty. "Besides, it wuz too near camp for any hornswogglin." These fellers right around camp are gettin' on to the names o' the regiments. They're learnin' to notice 200th Ind. on our caps, and foller you right into camp, and go up to the Colonel. We're layin' altogether too long in one place. The Army o' the Cumberland oughter move."

"We paid full value, C. O. D.," added Si, "and not in Drake's Plantation Bitters labels nor in busted Kalamazoo bank notes neither. I think fellers that pass patent-medicine labels and business-college advertisements on these folks for money, oughter to be tied up by the thumbs. It's mean."

"That's what I say, too," added Shorty with virtuous indignation. "Specially when you kin git the best kind o' Confederit money from Cincinnati for two cents on the dollar. I always lay in enough o' that to do my tradin' with."

"What's that? What's that?" gasped the Deacon. "Passin' Confederate money that you buy in Cincinnati at two cents on the dollar? Why, that's counterfeitin'."

"That's drawin' it a little too fine," said Shorty argumentatively. "These flabbergasted fools won't take greenbacks. I offered the woman to-day some, and she said she wouldn't be fcsad dead with 'em. She wanted Confedrit money. You may call it counterfeitin', but the whole Southern Confederisy is counterfeit, from its President down to the lowest Corporil. A dollar or two more or less won't make no difference. This feller at Cincinnati has got just as much right to print notes as they have in Richmond

"He prints 'em on better paper, his pictures are better, and he sells his notes much cheaper, and I don't see why I shouldn't buy o' him rather than o' them. I believe in patronizin' home industry."

"Si," said his father, in horrified tones, "I hope you

hain't bin passin' none o' the Cincinnati Confederate money on these people."

"I hope not, Pap. But then, you know, I ain't no bank-note detector. I can't tell the Cincinnati kind from the Richmond kind, and I never try very hard. All Conledrit money's alike to me, and I guess in the end it'll be to them. Both kinds say they'll be paid six months after the conclusion of peace betwixt the Confederate States and the United States, and I guess one stands jest as good show as the other. The woman asked me \$2 apiece for these chickens, and I paid her in the Conledrit money I happened to have in my pocket. I didn't notice whether it wuz printed in Cincinnati or Richmond. I got it from one o' the boys playin' p—. I mean he paid it to see me." He gave Shorty a furtive kick and whispered: "Come mighty nigh givin' myself away that time."

There was a long hill just before they came in sight of the entrance to the camp, and they got out and helped the mules up. They walked on ahead until they came to the top. The Deacon looked at the entrance, and said:

"I declare, if there isn't that owner o' this nigger waitin' for us."

"That so?" said Si, turning his eyes in that direction. "And he's got some officers with him. There's some officers jest mean enough to help these rebels ketch their niggers. I'd like to knock their addled heads off."

"Jest wait till we git discharged, Si, and then we kin lick 'em as much as we want to," said Shorty. "But we've got to do somethin' now. They can't see us yit. Deacon, jest take yer nigger and cut down around through the crick there until you come to the picket-line. Then wait. Me and Si'll go on in, and come around and find you."

"All right," assented the Deacon, who was falling into camp ways with remarkable facility. "But you've got to look out for that teamster. His meaner'n dog-fennel. He'll tell everything."

"Good point," said Si. "We must 'tend to him. See here, Groundhog," he continued, walking back to the teamster; "you don't know nothin' about that old man and nigger that got on your wagon. They slipped off into the woods when you wuzn't lookin', while you wuz busy with your mules, and you don't know whether they went to the right or the left, up the road or down it."

"T- you s'pose I'm goin' to help steal a nigger, and th- he about it to the officers, for you galoots, and all for nothin'?" said the teamster. "You are blamed fools, that's all I've got to say."

"Look here, Groundhog," said Shorty, coming up close, with a portentous doubled fist. "You know me, and you know Si. You know that either of us can maul the head off you in a minute, whenever we've a mind to, and we're likely any time to have a mind to. We're a durned sight nearer you all the time than any o' the officers, and you can't git away from us, though you may from them. They may buck and gag you, as they ought to, 'bout every day, but that won't be nothin' to the welting one of us 'll give you. Now, you tell that story, jest as Si said, and stick to it, or you won't have a whole bone in your carcass by the end o' the week."

When they came up to the entrance there indeed stood the owner of Abraham Lincoln, holding his horse, and by him stood the Lieutenant-Colonel of the 200th Ind., a big burly man, who had been a drover and an influential politician before he got his commission, and had a high reputation at home as a rough-and-tumble fighter. He had not added to his bellicose repulse since entering the field, because for some mysterious reason he had been

absent every time the regiment went into a fight, or was likely to. Consequently he was all the more blustering and domineering in camp, in spite of the frequent repressions he got from the modest, quiet little Colonel.

"Old Blowhard Billings is there," said Si. "Now we'll have a gust o' wind."

"Didn't know he was in camp," said Shorty. "I've a notion to bust a cap and scare him back to Nashville agin. Don't let him bluff you, Si, even if he is the Lieutenant-Colonel."

They rode up to the entrance looking as innocent and placid as if bringing in a load from the fields on the Wabash.

"Corporal Klegg," said the Lieutenant-Colonel sternly, "bring out that nigger from the wagon."

"We ain't got no nigger in the wagon, Colonel," said Si, with an expression of surprise.

"Come, now, don't fool with me, sir, or I'll make you very sorry for it. I'm no man to be trifled with, sir. If you ain't got a nigger in the wagon what 've you done with him?"

"We sia't done nothin' with him, Colonel," persisted Si. "I hain't had nothin' to do with no nigger since we started out this mornin'; hain't spoken to one. Sometimes niggers jump on our wagons, ride a little ways, and then jump off agin. I can't keep track of 'em. I generally make 'em git off when I notice 'em."

"Corporal Klegg, you're lyin' to me," said the Lieutenant-Colonel roughly. "I'll settle with you directly. "Groundhog, have you got a nigger in the wagon?"

"No, sir," replied the teamster.

"Didn't you have one?"

Groundhog looked up and caught Shorty's eye fixed unflinchingly on him.

"I b'lieve that one did git on," he stammered, "but he

got off agin d'rectly. I didn't notice much about him. My mules wuz very bothersome all the time. They're the durndest meanest mules that ever a man tried to drive. That there off swing-mule'd"——

"We don't want to hear nothin' about your mules. We'll look in the wagon ourselves."

The search developed nothing. The Lieutenant-Colonel came back to Si, angrier than ever.

"Look here, Klegg, you're foolin' me, an' I won't stand it. I'll have the truth out o' you if I have to kill you. Understand?"

There was a dangerous gleam in Si's and Shorty's eyes, but they kept their lips tightly closed.

"This gentleman here," continued the Lieutenant-Colonel, "says, and I believe his story, against all that you may say, that the men with this wagon, which he's bin watchin' all along, took his nigger away from him and drove him off with insults and curses. They threatened his life. He says he can't reckonize either of you, and likely you have disguised yourselves. But he reckonizes the wagon and the teamster, and is willin' to swear to 'em. I know he's tellin' the truth, because I know you fellers. You're impudent and sassy. You've bin among them that's hollered at me. You've bin stealin' other things besides niggers to-day, and have 'em in your possession. You're loaded down with things you've stolen from houses. I won't command a regiment of nigger-thieves. I won't have nigger-thieves in my regiment. If I've got any in my regiment I'll break 'em of it, or I'll break their infernal necks. I believe you fellers got away with that nigger, and I'll tie you up by the thumbs till I get the truth out o' you. Sergeant o' the guard, take charge o' these men, and bring 'em along. Take that stuff that they've stolen away from them and send it to my tent."

Si and Shorty got very white about the mouth, but Si merely said, as they handed their guns to the guard:

"Colonel, you may tie us up till doomsday, but you'll git no help out of us to ketch runaway niggers and put 'em back in slavery."

"Shut up, you scalawag," roared the Lieutenant-Colonel. "If I hear another word out o' you I'll buck-and-gag you."

They marched to Regimental Headquarters and halted, and the Lieutenant-Colonel renewed his browbeating, Si and Shorty continued obstinate, and the Lieutenant-Colonel, getting angrier every minute, ordered them tied up by the thumbs. While the Sergeant of the Guard, who was a friend of the boys, and had little heart for the work, was dallying with his preparations the Colonel himself appeared on the scene.

"Ah, Colonel, you've got back, have you?" said the Lieutenant-Colonel, little pleased at the interruption. "I've just caught two of the men in a little job o' nigger-stealin', and I was about to learn them a lesson which will break them of the habit. With your consent I'll go on with the work."

"Nigger-stealing?" said the Colonel quietly. "You mean helping a slave to get away? Did you learn whether the owner was a loyal man?"

"I don't know as that makes any difference," replied the Lieutenant-Colonel surlily. "As a matter of fact, I believe he said he had two sons in the rebel army."

"Well, Colonel," said the other, "I'll invite your attention to the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln, and the orders from the War Department, which prohibit the return of slaves to disloyal owners, and make it the duty of officers and men to assist in their escape. You had better dismiss the men to their quarters."

"If that's the case — if I don't resign. I'm no Abolitionist. I didn't come into the army to free the niggers."

"I shall take pleasure in forwarding your resignation with a recommendation of its acceptance for the good of



"I'LL INVITE YOUR ATTENTION TO THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION."

the service," said the Colonel calmly. "Men, go to your quarters."

"Altogether, Pap, I consider this a mighty good day's work," remarked Si that evening after supper, as they sat around the fire smoking, with Abraham Lincoln snoring vigorously on the floor, in his first night's sleep as a free man.

CHAPTER XXII.

TRYING TO EDUCATE ABRAHAM LINCOLN—TOO HIGH-PRESSURE
SCHOOLING—THE BOYS ON PICKET.

All three of the men at once became guardians of Abraham Lincoln, and in their several ways heartily interested in his welfare.

The Deacon was fired by the missionary spirit of his kind and class.

"No use talkin' or thinkin' no more about the heathen

 "On Greenland's icy mountains,

 Or India's coral strand,

 Where Afric's sunny fountains

 Roll down their golden sand,"

he communed with himself that evening, as he sat and smoked, and occasionally glanced at the ebon face of the sleeper in the corner. "Providence has cut out a job for me, and sent it home. Rather, He sent me where I couldn't help stumblin' upon it, and reckonizin' it. The responsibility to Him is clear. I've got heathen enough to last me for a 'coon's age, to lift that poor, ignorant soul up, and bring it to a knowledge of Christian ways. He's not nice nor purty; never heard of a pagan that wuz. Wouldn't be pagans if they wuz. But he's a man and a brother, and the Bible says that I'm my brother's keeper. I'll keep him agin fifty-'leven o' that old snortin' rebel and Copperhead Blowhard Billings. I wuzzent brung up in the woods to be scared by the hootin' of an owl."

"We might take him along with us, Si," said Shorty, in a low tone, with a nod toward Abraham Lincoln. "We could make a bully cook out of him. We could have no end of fun with him. We could learn him lots o' tricks.

He's as strong as an ox, and after I'd give him a few lessons in puttin' up his hands, he'd knock out that sassy nigger o' the Colonel's."

"I think so too," acquiesced Si, with an estimating glance at the sleeper.

Abraham Lincoln's iducation began bright and early the next morning, when Shorty kicked and shook him into wakefulness at the sound of the reveille.

"Git up; git up," said Shorty. "Wash your hands, comb your hair, cut some wood and put it on the fire, and bring a kettle o' water from the spring."

"Wash my hands and face," said the negro, in a dazed way. "Wha'fo? Don't got nufin on dem. Comb my ha'r? Nebber did dat in my life."

"Well, you've got to do it now every mornin', and be spry about it, too. Come, don't move around as if sawed out o' basswood. This ain't nigger-quarters. Git some springs in your feet."

And he emphasized his injunctions with a vigorous push.

The negro's face looked as if he began to have doubts as to whether freedom was all that had been represented to him. To have to get up early every morning, and wash his face and hands and comb his hair, seemed at the moment to be a high price to pay for liberty.

"Does I hab tuh do dat ebbery mornin', Boss?" he said, turning with a look of plaintive inquiry to the Deacon.

"Why, certainly," said the Deacon, who had just finished his own ablutions, and was combing his hair. "Every man must do that to be decent."

Abraham Lincoln gave a deep sigh.

"Washes himself as if he's afraid the water'd scald him," said the Deacon, watching the negro's awkward efforts. "He'll have to take more kindly to water, if he comes into a Baptist total immersion family. There's

no salvation except by water, and plenty of it, too. Now," he continued, as the black man finished, "pick up that ax and cut some wood to get breakfast with."

Abraham Lincoln took the ax, and began belaboring the wood, while the Deacon studied him with a critical eye. There was little that the Deacon prided himself on more than his skill as a wood chopper. People who think that the ax is a simple, skill-less tool, dependent for its efficiency solely upon the strength and industry with which it is wielded, make a great mistake. There is as much difference in the way men handle axes, and in the result they produce, as there is in their playing the violin. Anybody can chop, it is true, as anybody can daub with a paint brush, but a real axman of the breed of the Deacon, who had gone into the wilderness with scarcely any other tool than an ax, can produce results with it of which the clumsy hacker can scarcely imagine. The Deacon watched the negro's work with disgust and impatience.

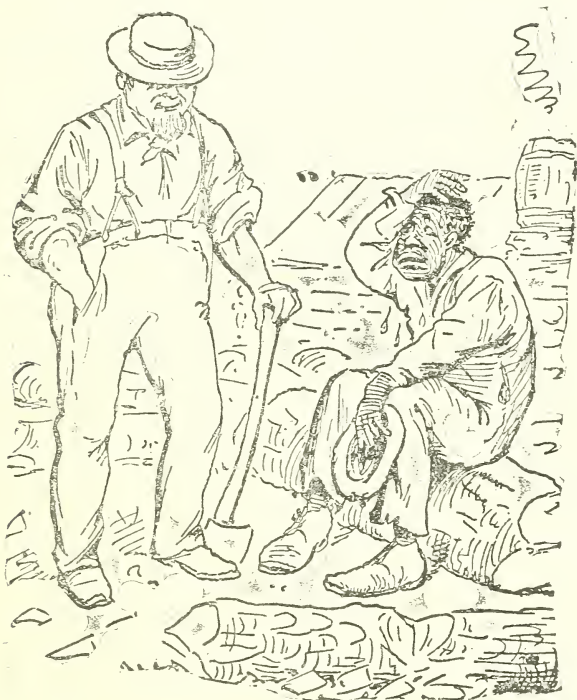
"Hadn't oughter named sich a clumsy pounder as that 'Abraham Lincoln,'" he mused. "Old Abe could handle an ax with the best of 'em. This feller handles it as if it was a handspike. If Si couldn't 've used an ax better'n that when he was 10 years old, I'd 'a felt mortally ashamed o' him. Gracious, what a job I have before me, o' makin' a first class man out o' him."

He took the ax from the negro's hand, and patiently showed him how to hold and strike with it. The man apparently tried his best to learn, but it was a perspiring effort for him and the Deacon. The negro presently dropped his ax, sat down on the log, and wiped his forehead with his shirtsleeve.

"Fore God, Boss, dat's de hardest way ob cuttin' wood dat I ebber seed. Hit'll kill me done daid to chop wood dat a-way."

"Pshaw!" said the impatient Deacon. "You're simply stupid; that's all. That's the only way to handle an ax. You kin cut with half the work that way."

He was discovering what so many of us have found out, that among the hardest things in life is that of getting people to give up clumsy ways for those that are better.



THE DEACON GIVES ABE A LESSON IN WOOD CHOPPING.

In the meanwhile the boys had gotten breakfast, and they called the Deacon in. Abraham Lincoln was given a liberal allowance of fried pork, soft bread, and coffee with an abundance of brown sugar in it, and for the while looked as if he had discovered that there were real, unmistakable blessings about freedom. But he

was no sooner through his meal than the boys put him through a course of tuition in washing the dishes, cleaning the house, and making the front tidy.

Their quick, positive, exact ways of working were a new and sore trial to the slouching, dilatory field-hand, and he looked very wretched.

Then Shorty, who was dying to train their new acquisition for a winning fight with the Colonel's negro, took him out behind the house for a little private instruction in boxing. The field-hand had never even heard of such a thing before, but Shorty was too much in earnest to care for a little thing like that. He went at his task with a will, making the negro double his fists just so, strike in a particular way, make a certain "guard," and hit out scientifically. Shorty was so enthusiastic that he did not stop to think that it was severe labor for the poor negro, and when he had to stop his lesson at the end of half an hour to go on battalion drill he left his pupil in a state of collapse.

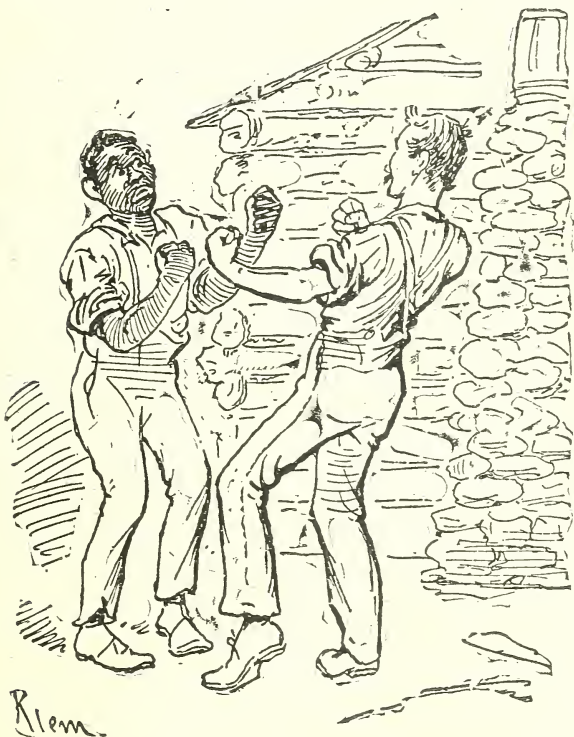
The negro sat down on a log, and began to wonder dimly if he went back to his master he would shoot him after all. May be he would be merciful enough to only give him a good thrashing, and then let him go and do his work his own way in the fields.

Ignorant of the new ordeal through which his charge had been going, the Deacon went out in search of him. He had just finished reading the news in the Cincinnati Commercial, ending up with an editorial on "Our Duty Toward the Freedmen," which impelled him to think that he could not begin Abraham Lincoln's education too soon.

"Now, Abe," said he briskly, "you've had a good rest, and it's time that you should be doin' something. You ought to learn to read as soon as possible, and you might as well begin to learn your letters at once. I'll

give you your first lesson. Here are some nice large letters in this newspaper head, that you kin learn very easily. Now, that first one is T. You see it is a cross."

"Afo' de Lawd, Boss," wailed the desperate negro, "I jest can't l'arn no mo', now, nohow. 'Deed I can't.



SHORTY INSTRUCTS THE NEGRO IN THE ART OF SELF-DEFENSE.

Hit's bin nuffin but l'arn, l'arn, ebbery minnit sence I got up dis mawnin', an' my haid's jest bustin', so hit is. A nigger's got no bizniss wid l'arnin'. Dat's only foh white people. A nigger's bizness is tuh wuk. I a'most wisht I wuz back wid my ole mas'r, who didn't want tuh larn me nuffin."

The astonished Deacon paused and reflected

"Mebbe we've bin tryin' to force this plant too fast. There's danger about puttin' new wine into old bottles. It's not the right way to train anything. The way to break a colt is to hang the bridle on the fence where he kin see it and smell it for a day or two. I'll go a little slow with him at first. Would you like something more to eat, Abe?"

"Yes, Boss. 'Deed I would," answered the negro with cheerful promptness, forgetting all about the pangs of the "new birth of freedom."

Some days later, Si had charge of a picket-post on the Readyville Pike, near Cripple Deer Creek. The Deacon went with them, at their request, which accorded with his own inclinations. The weather was getting warmer every day, which made him fidgety to get back to his own fields, though Si insisted that they were still under a foot of snow in Indiana. But he had heard so much about picket-duty that, next to a battle, it was the thing he most wanted to see. Abraham Lincoln was left behind to care for the "house." He had been a disappointment so far, having developed no strong qualities, except for eating and sleeping, of which he could do unlimited quantities.

"No use o' takin' him out on picket," observed Shorty, "unless we kin git a wagon to go along and haul rations for him. I understand now why these rebels are so poor; the niggers eat up everything they kin raise. I'm afraid, Deacon, he'll make the Wabash Valley look sick when you turn him loose in it."

"I guess my farm kin stand him," said the Deacon proudly. "It stood Si when he was a growin' boy, though he used to strain it sometimes."

They found a comfortable fence-corner facing south for

their "tent," which they constructed by making a roof of cedar boughs resting on a rail running from one angle to another. They laid more boughs down in the corner, and on this placed their blankets, making a bed which the Deacon pronounced very inviting and comfortable. They built a fire in front, for warmth and for cooking, and so set up housekeeping in a very neat and soldier-like way.



MR. KLEGG ENJOYS SOLID COMFORT.

The afternoon passed without special incident. Shorty came in with a couple of chickens, but the Deacon had learned enough to repress any questions as to where and how he got them. He soon became more interested in

his preparations for cooking them. He had built a big fire in a hole in the ground, and piled a quantity of dry cedar on this. Then he cut off the heads and legs of the chickens, and getting some mud from the side of the road, proceeded to cover each, feathers and all, with a coating nearly an inch thick.

"What in the world do you mean by that, Shorty?" asked the Deacon in surprise.

"He's all right, Pap," assured Si. "He'll show you a new wrinkle in chicken-fixin' that you kin teach mother when you go home. She knows more about cookin' than any other woman in the world, but I'll bet she's not up to this dodge."

The fire had by this time burned down to a heap of glowing embers. The boys scraped a hole in these, laid on it their two balls of mud, then carefully covered them with live coals and piled on a little more wood.

"I'll say right now," said the Deacon, "that I don't think much o' that way. Why didn't you take their feathers off and clean out their innards? Seems to me that's a nasty way."

"Wait and see," said Shorty sententiously.

Si had mixed some meal into a dough in the half-canteens he and Shorty carried in their haversacks. He spread this out on a piece of sheet-iron, and propped it up before the fire. In a little while it was nicely browned over, when Si removed it from the sheet-iron, turned it over, and browned the other side. He repeated this until he had a sufficiency of "hoe cakes" for their supper. A kettle of good, strong coffee had been boiling on the other side of the fire while this was going on. Then they carefully raked the embers off, and rolled out two balls of hard-baked clay. Waiting for these to cool a little, they broke them. The skin and feathers came off with the pieces and ~~wreaked~~ ^{revealed} deliciously savory, sweet

meat, roasted just to a turn. The intestines had shriveled up with the heat into little, hard balls, which were thrown away.

"Yum—yum—yum," said Shorty, tearing one of the chickens in two, and handing a piece to the Deacon, while Si gave him a sweet, crisp hoe cake and a cup of strong coffee. "Now, this's what you might call livin'. Never beat that cookin' in any house that had a roof. Only do that when you've stars in the roof of your kitchen."

"It certainly is splendid," admitted the Deacon. "I don't think Maria could've done better."

It was yet light when they finished their supper, filled their pipes, and adjusted themselves for a comfortable smoke. One of the men came back and said:

"Corporal, there's a rebel on horseback down the road a little ways who seems to be spying on us. We've noticed him for some little time. He don't come up in good range, and we haven't fired at him, hopin' he'd come closer. Better come and take a look at him."

"Don't do anything to scare him off," said Si. "Keep quiet. "Me and Shorty'll sneak down through the field, out of sight, and git him."

They picked up their guns and slipped out under the cover of the undergrowth to where they could walk along the fence, screened by the heavy thicket of sumach. Catching the excitement of the occasion, the Deacon followed them at a little distance.

Without discovery Si and Shorty made their way to a covert within an easy 50 yards of where the horseman sat rather uneasily on a fine, mettled animal. They took a good look at him. He was a young, slender man, below medium hight, with curly, coal-black hair, short whiskers, a hooked nose, and large, full eyes. He wore a gray suit of rather better make and material than was customary

in the rebel army. He had a revolver in his belt and a carbine slung to his saddle, but showed no immediate intention of using either. His right hand rested on his thigh, and his eyes were intently fixed on the distant picket-post.

"A rebel scout," whispered Si. "Shall we knock him over, and then order him to surrender, or halt him first, and then shoot?"

"He can't git away," said Shorty. "I have him kivered. You kivver his hoss's head. Then call him down."

Si drew his sights fine on the horse's head and yelled.

"Surrender, there, you dumb rebel."

The man gave a quick start, a swift glance at the blue uniforms, and instantly both hands went up.

"Dat ish all righd, poys. Ton't shood. I'm a friendt," he called in a strong German accent.

"Climb down off o' that hoss, and come here, and do it mighty sudden," called out Si, with his finger still on the trigger.

The horse became restive at the sound of strange voices, but the man succeeded in dismounting, and taking his reins in his hand led the horse up to the fence.

"Ferry gladt to see you, poys," said ne, surveying their blue garments with undisguised satisfaction, and putting out his other hand to shake.

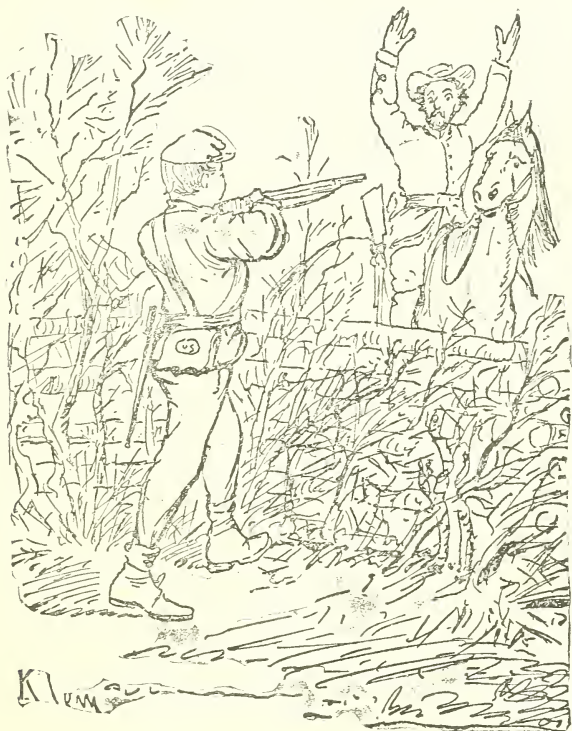
"Take off that revolver, and hand it here," ordered the wary Shorty, following the man with the muzzle of his gun. The man slipped his arm through the reins, unbuckled his revolver, and handed it to Shorty. Si jumped over the fence and seized the carbine.

"Who are you, and where did you come from?" asked Si, starting the man up the road toward the post.

"What richimint do you pelong to," asked the stranger, warily.

"We belong to Co. Q, 200th Injianny, the best regiment in Gen. Rosecrans's army," answered Si proudly, that the captive might understand where the honor of his taking belonged.

"Dat ish all righd," said the stranger, with an air of satisfaction. "The 200th Intianny is a ferry goot richi-



"SURRENDER, THERE, YOU DUMBED REBEL!"

mint. I saw dem whip Chohn Morkan's gavalry at Kreen Riffer. Glumsy farmer poys, but shoot like porn teffils."

"But who are you, and where did you come from?" repeated Si impatiently.

"I'm all righd. I'm Levi Rosenbaum, of Gen. Rosecrans's segret serfice. I got some news for him."

"You have?" said Si suspiciously. "Why didn't you ride right in and tell it to him? What've you bin hangin' around here all afternoon, watchin' our post for?"

"I vassn't sure you vass dere. I vass toldt dat de Yankee bickets vass koing to be pusht oud to Kripple Teer Greek to-day, put I titn't know it for sure. I vass afrait dat de reppels vass dere yet. Chim Chones, off de segret serfice, had akreed to come out dis afternoon and wave a flag if id vass all righd. I vass vaiting for his sign. Put he is probably trunk. He alfays kets so when he reaches gamp."

The Deacon joined them in the road, and gave a searching look at the prisoner.

"Ain't you a Jew?" he inquired presently. "Ain't your name Rosenbaum? Didn't you go through Posey County, Ind., a year or two ago, with a wagon, sellin' packs o' cloth to the farmers?"

"I'm an American citizen," said the man proudly, "de same as de rest of you. My relichion is Hebrew. I ton't know andt ton't gare what your relichion iss. Efery man hass vhat relichion dat suits him. My name is Rosenbaum. I tit sell gloth in Posey County, unt all ofer Intianny. Id vass goot gloth, too, unt I soldt id ad a pargain."

"It certainly was good cloth, and cheap," admitted the Deacon. "What in the world are you doin' down here in them clothes?"

"I'm toing yoost vhat dese men air toing here in teir gloze," answered Rosenbaum. "I'm drying to serfe de gountry. I'm toing id different from dem because I'm built different from dem. I hope I'm toing it as vell. Put I'm awful hungry. Kot anything to eat? Yoost a gup of coffee and a gracker? Ton't gare for any bork."

"Yes, we'll give you something to eat," said Shorty.

"I think there's some of our chicken left. You'll find that good."

"How tit you cook dat?" said Rosenlaum, looking at the tempting morsel suspiciously.

Shorty explained.

"Danks, I gan't ead id," said Rosenbaum with a sigh.

"Id ain'd kosher."

"What the devil's that?" asked Shorty.

"Id's my relighion. I gan't eggsplain. Sent for te Officer ob de Guard to dake me to Headquarters " answered Rosenbaum, sipping his coffee.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE JEW SPY TELLS HIS THRILLING STORY.

The Officer of the Guard was a long time in coming, and Mr. Rosenbaum grew quite chatty and communicative, as they sat around the bright fire of cedar logs and smoked.

"Yes," he said, "I haf been in de segret serfice effer since de beginning off de war—in vact, pefore de war, for I pegan ketting news for Frank Plair in de Vinter pefore de war. Dey say de Chews haff no batriotism. Dat's a lie. Vhy should dey haff no batriotism for gountries where dey where dreated like togs? In Chermany, where I vass porn, dey dreated us vorse than togs. Dey made us lif in a liddle, nasdy, big-ben off an alley; ve hat to go in ad suntown, unt shtay dere; ve hat to wear a tifferent gloze from other volks, unt ve titn't tare say our souls vere our own to any tirty loafer dat insulted us.

"Here ve are dreated like men, unt vhy shouldn't ve help keep de gountry from preaking up? Chews ought to do more dan anypody else, unt I mate up my mint from de fery virst dat I vass koing to do ail dat I Gould. De Chenerals haf tolt me dat I Gould do much petter for de gountry in the segret serfice dan as a solcher; dey Gould ket blenty of solchers, unt put vew sbies."

"Now you're shoutin'," said Shorty. "They kin git me to soldier as long as the war lasts, for the askin', but I wouldn't be a spy 10 minutes for a corn-basket full o' greenbacks. I have too much regard for my neck. I need it in my business."

"You a spy," said Si derisively. "You couldn't spy for sour apples. Them big feet o' your'n'd give you dead away to anybody that'd ever seen you before."

"Spyin' isn't the business that any straightfor'd man,"—the Deacon began to say in tones of cold disapproval, and then he bethought him of cruelty to the stranger, and changed hastily—"that I'd like to do. It's entirely too resky."

"O, it's jest as honorable as anything else, Pap," said Si, divining his father's thought. "All's fair in love and war. We couldn't git along without spies. They're as necessary as muskets and cannon."

"Inteed dey are," said Mr. Rosenbaum earnestly; "you vouldn't know vhat to do mit your muskets ant gannon if de spies titn't dell you vhere de reppels vere, unt how many dere vass off dem. I ko oud unt ket information dad id vould gost hundrets off lifes to ket, unt may save tousants off lifes, unt all dat id gosts is vun poor liddle Chew's neck, vhen hey drop on to him, some day, unt leafe him swinging vrom a dree. But vhen dat dime gomes, I shall make no more gomplaint dan dese odder poor poys do, who ket deir heads knockt off in paddle. I'm no petter dan dey are. My life pelongs to de gountry de same as deirs, unt dis free Government is vorth all our lifes, unt more too."

His simple, sincere patriotism touched the Deacon deeply. "I'd no idee that there was so much o' the man in a Jew," he said to himself. Then he asked the stranger:

"How did you come to go into the spy business, Mr. Rosenbaum?"

"Vell, I vas in St. Louis in de gloding pizniss, unt you know it vass purty hot dere. All de Chermans vass for de Union, unt most off de Amerigans unt Irish seemed to be Secessionists. I sided mit de Chermans, put as no-potty seemed to think dat a Chew hat any brincibles or gared for anything put de almighty tollar, efferypoty dalked righd oud pefore me, unt by geepin' my ears wite

open I kot hold off lots off news, vich I took straight to Cheneral Lyon. I kot vell ackvainted mit him, unt he used to sent me here unt dere to vind oud dings for him. I'd sell gray uniforms unt odder dings to de Secessionists, dey'd talk to one anodder righd pefore me as to vhat vass peing done, unt I'd keep my ears vide open all de dime, though I seemt to pe only dinking apout de fit unt de puttons unt de kold lace.

"Den Cheneral Lyon wanted to find oud chust eggsackly how many men dere vass in Gamp Chackson—no kuessvork—no subbose. I dook 2,000 off my pizniss kards, brinted on vwhite, unt 1,000 brinted on gray baper. I vent troo de whole camp. To effery man in uniform I gif a vwhite gard; to effery man widdout a uniform, who seemed to pe dere for earnest, I gif a gray gard. When I got pack I gounted my gards in Cheneral Lyon's office, unt fount I'd gif oud 500 vwhite gards unt 200 gray vuns. Den Cheneral Lyon dook oud apout 3,000 men, unt prot de whole crowd back mit him."

"Great man that Gen. Lyon," sighed the Deacon. "Too bad he was killed so soon."

"Den Cheneral Lyon," continued Rosenbaum, "sent me out vrom Sbringfielt, Mizזורi, too see how many men olt Bap Brice unt Pen McCullough had gaddered up akenst him from Mizזורi, Argansaw, Texas unt de blains. Holy Moses, I vass scared vhen I see de pile of dem. De whole vorldt seemt out dar, yipping unt yelling vor Cheff Tavis, trinking raw sod-corn vwhisky, making secession speeches, unt shooding ad marks.

"I rode righdt into dem, unt bretendet dat I vass looking vor Megzican silfer tollars to dake to Megzico to puy bowder unt leadt vor de reppel army. I hat a lot of new Gonfedrit notes dat I'd kot vrom my gousin, who vass in de topacco pizniss in Memphis. Dey vass kreat guriiosi-

ties, unt effery man who had a Megsican tollar vanted to drade it vor a Confedrit tollar.

"Dere vass no use dryin' to gount de men—might as vell have dried to gount de leafs on de drees, so I pegun to gount de rechiments. I stuck a pin in my righd lapel for effery Mizזורi rechiment, vun in my left lapel for effery Argansaw rechiment, ant vun in my vest for effery vun vrom Dexas. I hat plack pins for de gannons. I vass ketting along very vell, vhen I run agross Bob Smiles, a tirty loafer, who had been a gustomer in St. Louis. He vouldn't bay me, unt I hat to ket oud a writ unt levy on his gloze yoost as he vass dressing to ko to a quadroon ball.

"I left him mit only a neckdie, vvhich vas vorth nutting to me, as id hat peen vorn and soiled. He vass very sore akenst me, unt I vass not surbrized. It made me zick ad my sdemach vhen I saw him come up.

"'Hello, you tamt Tutch Chew,' he said. 'Vhat are you toing here?'

"I dried to pe very bleasant, unt I but oud my hant unsaid, mit my pest smile:

"'Koot kracious, Pob, how glat I am to see you. Vhen tit you ket here? Are you vell? How are de udder poys? Who's here? Where are you sdopping?'

"'Put I mighd as vell haf dried to make vriends mit a pull tog in vront of a varm house vhere all te people hat kone afay.'

"'Ko to plazes,' he said. 'None of your pizniss how I am, or how I got here, or how de udder poys are. Petter not let dem vind oud you're here. Dey'll dake it oud of your Chew hide for de vay you ust to skin dem in St. Louis. I vant to know vhat de teffel you are toing here?'

"'Now, Misder Smiles,' I said, bleasant as a May morning, 'dot's nod de vay to dalk to me. You know I got ub de stylishest gloze unt de pest vits in St. Louis. Ve hat

a little drouble, it is drue. It vass nutting, tnoogh. Yoost a little pizness disbute. You know I allfays dought you vun of de very nicest men in St. Louis, unt I said so, esen to de Squire unt to de Gonstable.'

"'Ko mit de teffel, you Savior-killing Chew,' said he. 'Shut up your mouth, or I'll stuff a biece of bork in it. I vant to know ad vonce vhat you are toing town here? Where did you gome vrom?'

"'I gome vrom Memphis,' said I. 'I'm in de serfice of de Southern Gonfedrisy. Chenereal Billow sent me to gadder up all de Megsican tollars I gould vind, to sent to Megsico to puy ammunition.'

"'Id's a lie, of gourse,' said he. 'A Chew'd radder lie dan ead, any tay. Den you're vun of dem St. Louis Dutch—dem imborted Hessians. Dey're all dead akenst us. Dey all ought to be killed. I ought to kill you myself for peing so cussed mean to me.'

"He put his hand on his revoller in a vay dat made my breakfast sour on my sthomach, but den I knew dat Pob Smiles vass a kreat plowhard, unt his park vasse much vorse dan his pite. In St. Louis he vass allfays koing to vite somepody unt kill somepody, put he neffer tone neither. Kvite a growd gaddered roundt, unt Pob plew off to dem, unt dey yelled,

"'Hang de Chew sby. Kill de tam rasgal,' unt odder tings dat made me unhappy. Put vhat made my vlesh grawl vass to see a man who vasn't saying much ko to a vagon, pull oud a rope unt pegin makin a noose on de ent. Pob Smiles gaught hold of my gollar unt started to trag me dovard a dree. Yoost as I vass gifing up everything for lost, up gomes Chim Chones—de same man I'm koing to meed here—he gome runnin' up. He vass dressed in vull uniform as a reppel officer—kray goat unt bants, silfer stars on his gollar, high boots, kray slouched hat mit kold gord, unt so on.

"Here, vhat ist de madder? Vhat's all dis fuss in gamp?" he said.

"We've ketched run of dem Tutch Chews vrom St. Louis sbying our gamp, Major,' said Pob Smiles, ledding loose of my gollar to salute de Major's silfer stars. 'And ve are koing to hang him.'

"A sby? How do you know he's a sby?" asked Chim Chones.



TRYING TO SAVE HIS NECK.

"Vell, he's Tutch; he's a Chew, unt he's vrom St. Louis. Vat more do you vant?" asked Pob Smiles. De growd yelled, unt de man mit de rope vent to de dree unt flung vun end ofer a limb.

"His peing a St. Louis Dutchman iss akezet him,'

said Chim Chones. 'But his peing a Chew iss in his favor. A Chew ton't gare a blame for bolitics. He hain't got no brincibles. He'd radder make a picayune off you in a drade dan haf a vagon-load of brincibles. But you vellers haf got notting to do mit sbies, anyvay. Dat's headquarters pizniss. I'm an officer at Cheneral Brice's headquarters. I'll dake him up dere unt ecksamine him. Pring him along.'

"'Ko along, Chew,' said two or dree off dem, gifing me kicks, as Pob Smiles sdarted mit me. De man mit de rope shtood py de dree looking very disappointed.

"Vhen ve got near Cheneral Brice's dent, Chim Chones says to de rest:

"'You shtop dere. Gome along mit me, Chew.'

"'He dook me py de gollar, unt ve valked toward Cheneral Brice's dent. He vhispered to me as ve vent along: You're all righd, Rosenbaum. I know you, unt I know vhat you're here for. Yoost keeb a sdiff ubber lip, dell your sdory sdraighd, unt I'll see you drough.'

"Dat scared me vorse dan effer, but all dat I gould do vass to keep up my nerfe, unt play my karts goolly. Ve vent into de Cheneral's dent, but he vass busy, unt motioned us mit his handt to de Adjutant-Cheneral.

"'Vat's de matter?' asked de Adjutant-Cheneral, motioning me to sit down, while he vent on making tally marks on a sheet off loose baper, as a man galled off de rechiments dat hat reported. Den he footed dem all up, unt, turning to anodder officer, read vrom it so many Argansas rechiments, so many Louisianny, so many Miz-zoori, so many Dexas, so many patteries of ardillery, unt he said to anodder officer as he laid de paper face down among de odder bapers on his table, 'Yoost as I tolt you, Colonel. We haf vully 22,000 men here ready for pattle.' Den to us: 'Vell, now, vhat gan I do for you?'

"'De poys had bicked up dis Chew for a sby, Colonel,'

said Chim Chones, pointing to me, 'unt dey vere apout to hang him, yoost to pass away de afternoon more dan for anything else. I dook him away from dem, delling dem dat id vass your privilech to hang sbies, unt you would do it aggording to de science of war. I prung him ub here to ket him away vrom dem. After dey've gone away or got inderested in something else I'll dake him unt put him oudside of gamp."



"I KNOW YOU, UNT I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE HERE FOR."

"All righd,' said de Adjutant-General, mitout daking much inderest in de madder. 'Do mit him as you blease. A Chew more or less isn't of any gonsequence. Probably he deseriefes hanging, though, put id isn't well to en-

gourage de poys to hang men on sight. Dey're quite too ready to do dat anyvay.'

"He dalked to de udder man a liddle, unt den when he vent away he durned to me, unt said, sort of lazy like, as if he titn't gare anyding apout it:.

"Where are you vrom?"

"Vrom Memphis,' said I.

"Kreat blace, Memphis,' said he; 'vun of de thriving suburbs of Satan's Kingdom. Had lots of vun dere. I know effery faro bank in it, which speaks vell for my memory, if not for my morals. — What pizniss vas you in?"

"Gloding,' said I.

"What a fool question to ask a Chew vhat piziness he vass in,' said he, yawning. 'Of gourse you vass in de gloding drade. You vass porn in it. All Chews haf pin since dey gambled for de Savior's garments.'

"Dey vassn't Chews vhat gambled for Christ's gloze,' said I, bicking up a liddle gourage. 'Dey vass Romans—Italians—Dagoes.'

"Vass dey?" said he. 'Vell, meppe dey vas. I haven't read my Piple for so long dat I've glean forgot. Say, vhat are you toing mit all dem bins?"

"De question gome so unegspegted dat it gome near knocking me off my pase. I hat galgulated on almost effery odder bossible ting, unt vass ready for it, egsept dat vool question. I thought for a minit dat disappointed man by de dree mit de rope vass koing to ket his chob after all. But I gaddered myself togedder mit a jerk, unt galmly said mit a smile:

"O, dat's some of my voolishness. I gan't ket ofer peing a dailor, and sticking all de bins what I find in my lapel. I must bick up effery vun I see.'

"Queer where you found dem all,' said he, 'Must've brung dem vrom Memphis mit you. I gan't find vun in de whole gamp. Our men use nails unt thorns instead

of bins. I've been wanting a lot of bins for my bapers. Let me haf all you got. I wish you had a paper of dem.'

"I did have two or three bapers in my bockets, unt virst I hat a vool idea of offering dem to him. Den I remembered dat disappointed man mit de rope by de dree, unt bulled de bins oud of my lapels vun by vun unt gif dem to him, drying to keep gount in my head as I tit so.

"Vhat are you toing here, anyvay?" he asked as he gaddered up de bins unt put dem in a basteboard box.

"I gome here ad Cheneral Billow's orders, to pick up some Megzigan silfer tollars, to puy ammunition in Megzigo.'

"Anudder of olt plowhard Billow's fool schemes,' said he. 'I know old Billow. I serfed mit him in Megzigo, vhen he dug his ditch on de wrong side of his vortification. He's probably koing to do something else mit de tollars dan puy ammunition. Old Gid Billow's a mighty slick vun, I dell you, vhen id gomes to villing his own bockets. He's no vool dere, vwhatever he may pe in odder vays. He's vorking some scheme to skin our men, unt making you his bartner, den he'll durn around unt skin you. I'll sdop id koing any funder by durning you oud of gamp, unt I ought to dake away vrom you all de money you've gaddered up, but I vont do id on vun gondition.'

"Vhat iss your gondition?" said I, drying not to sbeak too quick.

"You say you are in de gloding bizniss. I vant awfully a nice uniform, yoost like de Major's dere. Vhat's such a uniform vorth?"

"Apoud \$75,' said I.

"I paid \$65 for dis in St. Louis,' said Chim Chones.

"Vell, \$10 iss not much of a skin for a Memphis Chew, laughed de Adjutant-General. 'I tell you vhat I'll do, if you'll svear py de pook of Deuteronomy, unt Moses, Apraham unt Isaac, to haf me insite of two veeks yoost

such a uniform as de Major's dere, I'll led you off mit all de money you haf made alretty, un vhen you gome pack mit it I'll gif you written bermission to drade vor effery silfer dollar in gamp.'

"Id iss a pargain,' said I.

"Unt id'll pe a berfect fit,' said he.

"Yoost like de baper on de vall,' said I. 'Led me dake your measure.'

"I had my eye all de dime on de baper he had laid garelessly town unt forgotten. I bulled my tape-measure oud. De olt idee of de dailor gome up. I forgot apoud de disappointed man mit de rope py de dree, unt vass my old self daking de measure of a gustomer. I put all de vigures town on his biece of baper, mitout his nodicing vhat I vass using. I asked him aboud de lining, de drimming, unt de bockets, unt wrote dem town. Den I volded up de baper unt sduck id in my preast bocket, unt my heart gif a pig chump, though I kept my vace sdraight, unt vent on dalking apout puttuns unt silk praid unt kold lace for de sleeves. I bromised him he shoulthaf de vineest uniform in de army in two veeks dime. Yoost den some officers gome in, unt Chim Chones hurried me oud. I Gould nod understant Chim Chones. He hurried me agross to a blace pehint de voods, vhere ve found some horses.

"Untie dat one unt ket on, gvick,' he said. 'My Gott, you've got de thing dead to righds, you've got effery ding on dat biece of baper. My Gott, vhat luck! Smartest ting I effer saw done. Ket that baper in Chen-eral Lyon's hands bevore midnight if you kill yourself unt horse in toing id. I'll dake you oud past part of de quarts, unt show you how to afoid de rest. Den rite as if de teffel vass after you, until you're at Chen-eral Lyon's dent.'

"I vas dumffounded. I looked ad Chim Chones. His

eyes vass like vire. Den it suttently oggurred to me dat Chim Chones vass a sby, too.

"As I mounted I looked back agross de gamp. I saw de rope still hanging vrom a limb of de tree, and de disappointed man sitting town peside id patiently vaiting,



RIDING FOR GEN. LYON'S HEADQUARTERS

"Dat nighd de baper vas in Cheneral Lyon's hands, unt de next nighd de army moved oud to vight de pattle of Vilson's Greek.

"De Adjutant-Cheneral is still vaiting for dat uniform."

"Halt, who comes there?" called out Shorty, whose quick ears caught the sound of approaching footsteps

"The Officer of the Guard," responded from the bank of darkness in the rear.

"Advance Officer of the Guard, and give the countersign," commanded Shorty, lowering his musket to a charge bayonets.

The officer advanced, leaned over the bayonet's point and whispered the countersign.

"Countersign's correct," announced Shorty, bringing his gun to a present. "Good evening, Lieutenant. We have got a man here who claims to belong to the Secret Service."

"Yes," answered the officer. "We've been expecting him all afternoon, but thought he was coming in on the other road. I'd have been around here long ago only for that. This is he, is it? Well, let's hurry in. They want you at Headquarters as soon as possible."

"Good night, poys," called out Mr. Rosenbaum as he disappeared; "see you again soon."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DEACON GOES HOME—SHORTY FALLS A VICTIM TO HIS GAMBLING PROPENSITIES.

The boys did not finish their tour of picket duty till the forenoon of the next day, and it was getting toward evening when they reached their own camp.

"What in the world's going on at the house?" Si asked anxiously, as they were standing on the regimental parade ground waiting to be dismissed. Strange sounds came floating from that direction. The scraping of a fiddle was mingled with yells, the rush of feet, and laughter.

"I'll go over there and see," said the Deacon, who had sat down behind the line on a pile of the things they had brought back with them. He picked up the coffee-pot, the frying-pan, and one of the haversacks, and walked in the direction of the house. As he turned into the company street and came in sight of the cabin he looked for an instant, and then broke out:

"I'm blamed if they don't seem to be havin' a nigger political rally there, with the house as campaign headquarters. Where in time could they have all come from? Looks like a crow-roost, with some o' the crows drunk."

Apparently, all the negro cooks, teamsters, officers' servants, and roustabouts from the adjoining camps had been gathered there, with Groundhog, Pilgarlic, and similar specimens of the white teamsters among them and leading them on.

Seated on a log were three negroes, one sawing on an old fiddle, one picking a banjo, and one playing the bones. Two negroes were in the center of a ring, danc-

ing, while the others patted "Juba." All were more or less intoxicated. Groundhog and Pilgarlic were endeavoring to get up a fight between Abraham Lincoln and another stalwart, stupid negro, and were plying them with whisky from a canteen and egging them on with words.



THE NEGROES MERRYMAKING.

The Deacon strode up to Groundhog and catching him by the arm demanded sternly:

"What are you doing, you miserable scoundrel? Stop it at once."

Groundhog, who had drunk considerably himself, and was pot-valiant, shook him off roughly, saying:

"G'way from here, you dumbd citizen. This haint

none o' your bizness. Go back to your haymow, and leave soldiers alone."

The Deacon began divesting himself of his burden to prepare for action, but before he could do so Shorty rushed in, gave Groundhog a vigorous kick, and he and Si dispersed the rest of the crowd in a hurry with sharp cuffs upon all that they could reach. The meeting broke up without a motion to adjourn.

The Deacon caught Abraham Lincoln by the collar and shook him vigorously.

"You black rascal," he said, "what've you bin up to?"

"Didn't 'spect you back so soon, Boss," gasped the negro. "Said you wouldn't be back till ter-morrer."

"No matter when you expected us back," said the Deacon, shaking him still harder, while Si winked meaningly at Shorty. "What d'ye mean by sich capers as this? You've bin a-drinkin' likker, you brute."

"Cel'bratun my freedom," gasped the negro. "Groundhog done tole me to."

"I'd like to celebrate his razzled head offen him," exploded the Deacon. "I'll welt him into dog's-meat hash if I kin lay my hands on him. He's too mean and wuthless to even associate with mules. If I'd a dog on my place as ornery as he is I'd give him a button before night. He's not content with bein' a skunk himself, he wants to drag everybody else down to his level. Learnin' you to drink whisky and fight as soon as you're out o' bondage. Next thing he'll be learnin' you to steal sheep and vote for Vallandigham. I'd like to put a stone around his neck and feed him to the catfish."

There was something so strange and earnest about the Deacon's wrath that it impressed the negro more than any of the most terrible exhibitions of wrath that he had

seen his master make. He cowered down, and began crying in a maudlin way and begging :

"Pray God, Boss, don't be so hard on a poor nigger."

Si, who had learned something more of the slave nature than his father, ended the unpleasant scene by giving Abraham Lincoln a sharp slap across the hips with a piece of clapboard and ordering :

"Pick up that camp-kettle, go to the spring and fill it, and git back here in short meter."

The blow came to the negro as a welcome relief. It was something that he could understand. He sprang to his feet, grinned, snatched up the camp-kettle, and ran to the spring.

"I must get that man away from here without delay," said the Deacon. "The influences here are awful. They'll ruin him. He'll lose his soul if he stays here. I'll start home with him to-morrow."

"He'll do worse'n lose his soul," grumbled Shorty, who had been looking over the provisions. "He'll lose the top of his woolly head if he brings another gang o' coons around here to eat us out o' house and home. I'll be gosh durned if I don't believe they've et up even all the salt and soap. There aint a crumb left of anything. Talk about losin' his soul. I'd give six bits for something to make him lose his appetite."

"I'll take him home to-morrow," reiterated the Deacon. "I raised over 'leven hundred bushels o' corn last year, 'bout 500 o' wheat, and just an even ton o' pork. I kin feed him awhile, anyway, but I don't know as I'd chance two of him."

"What'll you do if you have him and the grasshoppers the same year, Pap?" inquired Si.

That night the Deacon began his preparations for returning home. He had gathered up many relics from the battlefield to distribute among his friends at home

and decorate the family mantelpiece. There were fragments of exploded shells, some canister, a broken bayonet, a smashed musket, a solid 12-pound shot, and a quart or more of battered bullets picked up in his walks over the scenes of the heavy fighting.

"Looks as if you were goin' into the junk business, Pap," commented Si, as the store was gathered on the floor.

The faithful old striped carpetsack was brought out, and its handles repaired with stout straps. The thrifty Deacon insisted on taking home some of Si's and Shorty's clothes to be mended. The boys protested.

"We don't mend clothes in the army, Pap," said Si. "They aint wuth it. We just wear 'em out, throw 'em away, and draw new ones."

The Deacon held out that his mother and sisters would take great pleasure in working on such things, from the feeling that they were helping the war along. Finally the matter was compromised by putting in some socks to be darned and shirts to be mended. Then the bullets, canister, round-shot, fragments of shell, etc., were filled in.

"I declare," said the Deacon dubiously, as he hefted the carpetsack. "It's goin' to be a job to lug that thing back home. Better hire a mule-team. But I'll try it. Mebbe it'll help work some o' the stupidity out o' Abraham Lincoln."

The whole of Co. Q and most of the regiment had grown very fond of the Deacon, and when it was noised around that he was going, they crowded in to say good-by, and give him letters and money to take home. The remaining space in the carpetsack and all that in the Deacon's many pockets were filled with these.

The next morning the company turned out to a man and escorted him to the train, with Si and his father

marching arm-in-arm at the head, the company files playing

"Aint I glad to get out of the Wilderness,
Way down in Tennessee,"

and Abraham Lincoln, laden with the striped carpetsack, the smashed musket and other relics, bringing up the rear, under the supervision of Shorty.

Tears stood in the old man's eyes as he stood on the platform of the car, and grasped Si's and Shorty's hands in adieu. His brief farewell was characteristic of the strong, self-contained Western man:

"Good-by, boys. God bless you. 'Take care o' yourselves. Be good boys. Come home safe after the war."

The boys stood and watched the train with sorrowful eyes until it had passed out of sight in the woods beyond Overall's Creek, and then turned to go to their camp with a great load of homesickness weighing down their hearts.

"Just think of it; he's going straight back to God's country," said someone near.

A sympathetic sigh went up from all

"Shet up," said Shorty savagely. "I don't want to hear a word o' that kind." He pulled his cap down over his eyes, rammed his hands deep in his pockets, and strode off, trying to whistle

"When this cruel war is over,

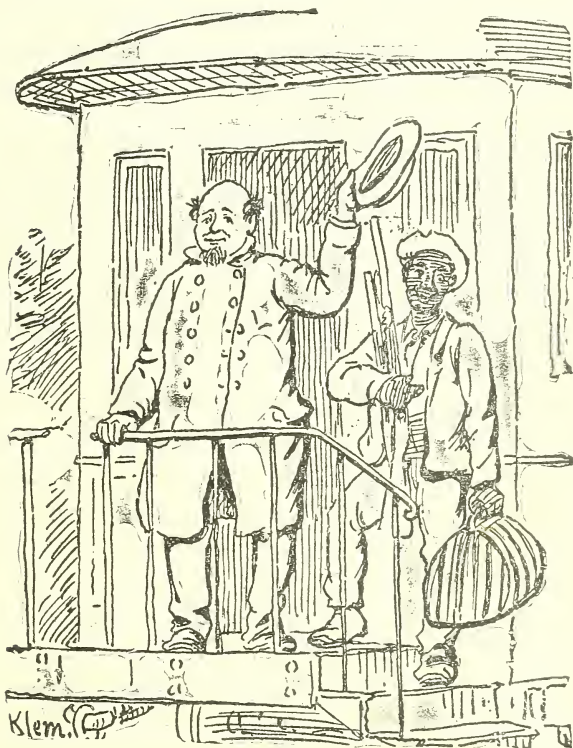
but the attempt was a dismal failure. Si separated from the crowd and joined him. They took an unfrequented and roundabout way back to camp.

"I feel all broke up, Si," said Shorty. "I wish that we were goin' into a fight, or something to stir us up."

Si understood his partner's mood, and that it was likely to result in an outbreak of some kind. He tried to get

him over to the house, so that he could get him interested in work there.

They came to a little hidden ravine, and found it filled with men playing that most fascinating of all gambling games to the average soldier—chuck-a-luck. There were a score of groups, each gathered around as many “sweat-



MR. KLEGG STARTS FOR HOME.

boards.’ Some of the men “running” the games were citizens, and some were in uniform. Each had before him a small board on which was sometimes painted, sometimes rudely marked with charcoal, numbers from 1 to 6. On some of the boards the numbers were indi-

cated by playing-cards, from ace to six-spot, tacked down. The man who "ran" the game had a dice-box, with three dice. He would shake the box, turn it upside down on the board, and call upon the group in front of him to make their bets.

The players would deposit their money on the numbers that they fancied, and then, after the inquiry, "All down?" the "banker" would raise the box and reveal the dice. Those who had put their money on any of the three numbers which had turned up, would be paid, while those who bet on the other three would lose.

Chuck-a-luck was strictly prohibited in camp, but it was next to impossible to keep the men from playing it. Citizen gamblers would gain admittance to camp under various pretexts and immediately set up boards in secluded places, and play till they were discovered and run out, by which time they would have made enough to make it an inducement to try again whenever they could find an opportunity. They followed the army incessantly for this purpose, and in the aggregate carried off immense sums of the soldiers' pay. Chuck-a-luck is one of the fairest of gambling games, when fairly played, which it rarely or never is by a professional gambler. A tolerably quick, expert man finds little difficulty in palming the dice before a crowd of careless soldiers so as to transfer the majority of their bets to his pocket. The regular citizen gamblers were reinforced by numbers of insatiable chuck-a-luckers in the ranks, who would set up a "board" at the least chance, even under the enemy's fire, while waiting the order to move.

Chuck-a-luck was Shorty's greatest weakness. He found it as difficult to pass a chuck-a-luck board as an incurable drunkard does to pass a dram-shop. Si knew this, and shuddered a little as he saw the "layouts," and tried to get his partner past them. But it was of no

use. Shorty was in an intractable mood. He must have a strong distraction. If he could not fight he would gamble.

"I'm goin' to bust this feller's bank before I go another step," said he, stopping before one. "I know him. He's the same feller that, you remember, I busted down before Nashville. I kin do it agin. He's a bum citizen gambler. He thinks he's the smartest chuck-a-lucker in the Army o' the Cumberland, but I'll learn him different."

"Don't risk more'n a dollar," begged Si as a final appeal.

"All down?" called the "banker."

"Allow doublin'?" inquired Shorty.

"Double as much as you blamed please, so long's you put your money down," answered the "banker" defiantly.

"Well, then, here goes a dollar on that five-spot," said Shorty, "skinning" a bill from a considerable roll.

"Don't allow more'n 25 cents bet on single cards, first bet," said the "banker," dismayed by the size of the roll.

"Thought you had some sand," remarked Shorty contemptuously. "Well, then, here's 25 cents on the five-spot, and 25 cents on the deuce," and he placed shin-plasters on the numbers. Now, throw them dice straight, and no fingerin'. I'm a-watchin' you.

"Watch and be durned," said the banker, surlily.

"Watch your own business, and I'll watch mine. I'm as honest as you are any day."

The "banker" lifted the box, and showed two sixes and tray up. He raked in the bets on the ace, deuce, four and five-spots, and paid the others.

"Fifty cents on the deuce; 50 cents on the five," said Shorty, laying down the fractional currency.

Again they lost.

"A dollar on the deuce; a dollar on the five," said Shorty.

The same ill luck.

"Two dollars on the deuce; two dollars on the five," said Shorty, though Si in vain plucked his sleeve to get him away.

The spots remained obstinately down.

"Four dollars on the deuce; four dollars on the five," said Shorty.

No better luck.

"Eight dollars on the deuce; eight dollars on the five," said Shorty.

"Whew, there goes more'n a month's pay," said the other players, stopping to watch the dice as they rolled out, with the deuce and five spot somewhere else than on top. "And his roll's beginning to look as if an elephant had stepped on it. Now we'll see his sand."

"Come, Shorty, you've lost enough. You've lost too much already. Luck's agin you," urged Si. "Come away."

"I aint goin'," said Shorty, obstinately. "Now's my chance to bust him. Every time them spots don't come up increases the chances that they'll come up next time. They've got to. They're not loaded; I kin tell that by the way they roll. He aint fingerin' 'em; I stopped that when I made him give 'em a rollin' throw, instead o' keepin' 'em kivered with the box."

He fingered over his roll carefully and counted out two piles of bills, saying:

"Sixteen dollars on the deuce; sixteen dollars on the five-spot. And I aint takin' chances o' your jumpin' the game on me, Mr. Banker. I want you to plank down \$32 alongside o' mine."

Shorty laid down his money and put his fists on it. "Now put yours right there."

"O, I've got money enough to pay you. Don't be

skeered," sneered the banker, "and you'll git it if you win it."

"You bet I will," answered Shorty. "And I'm goin' to make sure by havin' it right on the board alongside o' mine. Come down, now."

The proposition met the favor of the other players, and the banker was constrained to comply.

"Now," said Shorty, as the money was counted down, "I've got jest \$20 more that says that I'll win. Put her up alongside."

The "banker" was game. He pulled out a roll and said as he thumbed it over:

"I'll see your \$20, and go you \$50 better that I win."

Shorty's heart beat a little faster. All his money was up, but there was the \$50 which the Deacon had intrusted to him for charitable purposes. He slipped his hand into his bosom, felt it, and looked at Si. Si was not looking at him, but had his eyes fixed on a part of the board where the dice had been swept after the last throw. Shorty resisted the temptation for a moment, and withdrew his hand.

"Come down, now," taunted the "banker." "You've blowed so much about sand. Don't weaken over a little thing like \$50. I'm a thoroughbred, myself, I am. The man don't live that kin bluff me."

The taunt was too much for Shorty. He ran his hand into his bosom in desperation, pulled out the roll of the Deacon's money, and laid it on the board.

Si had not lifted his eyes. He was wondering why the flies showed such a liking for the part of the board where the dice were lying. Numbers of them had gathered there, apparently eagerly feeding. He was trying to understand it.

He had been thinking of trying a little shy at the four-spot himself, as he had noticed that it had never won,

and two or three times he had looked for it before the dice were put in the box, and had seen the "banker" turn it down on the board before picking the dice up. A thought flashed into his mind.

The "banker" picked up the dice with seeming carelessness, dropped them into the box, gave them a little shake, and rolled them out. Two threes and a six came up. The "banker's" face lighted up with triumph, and Shorty's deadened into acute despair.

"I guess that little change is mine," said the "banker" reaching for the pile.

"Hold on a minnit, Mister," said Si, covering the pile with his massive hands. "Shorty, look at them dice. He's got molasses on one side. You kin see there where the flies are eatin' it."

Shorty snatched up the dice, felt them, and touched his tongue to one side. "That's so, sure's you're a foot high," said he sententiously.

Just then someone yelled:

"Scatter! Here come the guards!"

All looked up. A company coming at the double-quick was almost upon them. The "banker" made a final desperate claw for the money, but was met by the heavy fist of Shorty and knocked on his back. Shorty grabbed what money there was on the board, and he and Si made a burst of speed which took them out of the reach of the "provos" in a few seconds. Looking back from a safe distance they could see the "bankers" and a lot of the more luckless ones being gathered together to march to the guard-house.

"Another detachment of horny-handed laborers for the fortifications," said Shorty grimly, as he recovered his breath, watched them and sent up a yell of triumph and derision. "Another contribution to the charity fund," he

continued, looking down at the bunch of bills and fractional currency in his hands.

"Shorty," said Si earnestly, "promise me solemnly that you'll never bet at chuck-a-luck agin as long as you live."



SHORTY SETTLES WITH THE BANKER.

"Si, don't ask me impossibilities. But I want you to take every cent o' this money and keep it. Don't you ever give me more'n \$5 at a time, under any consideration. Don't you do it, if I git down on my knees and ask for it. Lord, how nigh I come to losin' that \$50 o' your father's."

CHAPTER XXV.

SOME MORE OF MR. LEVI ROSENBAUM'S ADVENTURES.

Mr. Rosenbaum became a frequent visitor to the Hoosier's Rest, and greatly interested Si and Shorty with his stories of adventure.

"How did you happen to come into the Army of the Cumberland?" asked Si. "I'd a-thought you'd staid where you knowed the country and the people."

"Dat vass yoost de drouble," replied Rosenbaum. "I got to know dem ferry vell, but dey got to know me a gonfounded sight bedder. Ven I vass in de gloding pissniss in Saint Louis I dried to haff eferypoddy know me. I atverdised. I vanted to pe a krate pig sunflower dat eferypoddy nodiced. But vhen I got to pe a sby I vanted to pe a modest liddle violet dat hid unter de leafes, unt nopoddy saw. Den efery man vhat knowed me pecome a danger, unt it got so dat I shuddered efery dime dat I see a limp running oud vrom a dree, for I didn't know how soon I might be hung from it. I hat some awful narrow escapes, I tell you.

"But vhat decided me to leafe de gountry unt skip ofer de Mississippi Riffer vas someding dat habbened down in de Poston Mountains yoost pefore de pattle of Bea Ridge. I vas down dere vatching Van Dorn unt Pen McCullough for Chenereal Curtis, unt vas ketting along all righd. I vas sdill playing de olt racket apout puying up Megzigan silfer tollars to sent to Megzico to puy ammunition. Vun night I vass sidding at a campfire mit two or three udders, vhen a growd of Dexans gome up. Dey vas yoost trunk enough to pe devilish, unt had a rope mit a noose on de endt, vich I nodiced virst ding. I

hat gotten to keep a sharp lookoud for such dings. My flesh creeped vhen I saw dem. I dried to dink vat hat sdirred dem up all at vonce, but couldn't for my life recollect, for efferyding had been koing on all right for seferal days



A CLOSE CALL FOR ROSENBAUM.

"De man mit de rope—a pig, ugly prute, mit red hair unt vun eye—says:

"'You're a Chew, aind you?"

"'Yes,' says I, 'I vas porn dat vay.'

"'Vell,' says he, 've're koing to hang you rightd off.' Unt he put de noose aroud my neck unt pegan drying to throw de udder endt ofer a limb.

"'Vhat for?' I yelled, drying to pull de rope off my neck. 'I aind done nutting.'

"'Haint eh?' said de man mit vun eye. 'You hook-nosed Chews grucified our Saffior.'

"'Vhy, you red-headed vool,' said I, ketching holt off de rope mit both hands. 'dat habbened more as 1,800 years ako. Let me go.'

"'I ton't gare if it did,' said de vun-eyed man, gedding de endt of de rope ofer de limb, 've didn't hear apout it til de Chaplain tolt us dis morning, unt den de poys said ve'd kill effery Chew ve gome agross. Ketch holt of de endt dere, Bowers.'

"De udder vellers aaround me laughed at de Dexans so dat dey finally akreed to let me ko if I'd bromise not to do it again, holler for Cheff Davis, unt dreat all around. Id vas a vool ding, but id sgared me verse'n anyding else, unt I resolded to ket oud of dere unt ko vere de peoples read deir Bibles unt de newsbabers."

"How did you manage to keep Gen. Curtis posted as to the number of rebels in front of him?" asked Si. "You couldn't always be running back and forth from one army to the other."

"O. dat vas easy enough. You see, Chenereal Curtis vas advancing, unt de reppels valling pack most of de dime. Dere vass cabins effery liddle vays along de roadt. All dese haf krate big fireblaces, built of smoot rocks, vvhich dey pick up uod of de creek unt wherever dey gan find dem.

"I'd ko into dese houses unt dalk mit de people unt blay mit de chiltren. I'd sit by de fire unt bick up a dead coal unt mark on dese smoot rocks. Sometimes I'd draw horses unt vagons unt men to amuse the chiltren. Sometimes I'd dalk to de olt folks apout how long dey'd peen in de gountry, how many bears unt deers de man hat killed, how far it vas to de next blace, how de

roads run, unt so on, unt I'd make marks on de jam of de fireplace to help me understand.

"De next day our scouts would come in unt see de marks unt understand dem yoost as vell as if I'd wrote dem a letter. I'd fixed id all up mit dem pefore I left gamp. I kin draw ferry vell mit a piece of charcoal. I'd make pictures of men vat would make de children unt olt folks open deir eyes. Our scouts would understand vchich vun meant Pen McCullough, vich vun Van Dorn, vchich vun Bap Brice, unt so on. Udder marks would show vchich vay each vun vas koing unt how many men he hat mit him. De reppels neffer dropt on to it, but dey game so glose to it vunce or twice dat my hair stood on endt."

"That curly mop of yours'd have a time standing on end," ventured Shorty. "I should think it'd twist your neck off dryin' to."

"Vell, somedings gif me a quæser feeling apout de throat vun day ven I saw a reppel Colonel sdop unt look ferry hard at a long letter vchich I'd wrote dis vay on a rock.

"Who done dat?" he asked.

"Dis man here," says de olt voman. "He done it vchile he vas gassing mit de olt man unt vooling mit de children. Lot o' pesky nonsense, marking up the valls dat-a-vay."

"Looks like very systematic nonsense," said de Colonel very stern unt sour. "There may be something in it. Did you do this?" said he, turning to me.

"Yes, sir," said I. "I haf a pad habit of marking vhen I'm dalking. I alvays done it, efen vhen I vas a child. My mudder used to often slap me for sboiling de valls, but she gould nefer preak me of it."

"Humph," said he, nod at all sadisfied mit my story,

unt looking at de scratches harder dan effer. 'Who are you, unt vhat are you doing here?'

"I toldt him my story apout puying Megzigan silfer tollars, unt showed him a lot of de tollars I'd pought.

"Your story ain'd reasonable,' said he. 'You hafn't done pizness enough to pay you for all de time you've spend around de army. I'll put you unter guard till I can look into your case.'



THE SPY IN CUSTODY.

"He galled to de Serchent of de Guart, unt ordered him to dake charge of me. De Serchent vas dat same tirty loafer, Pob Smiles, dat I hat de droubles mit py Vilson's Crick. He kicked me unt pounded me, unt put me on my horse, mit my hants tied behind me, unt my feet

tied unter de horse's pelly. I vas almost tead py night, vhen ve reached Headquarters. Dey gif me somedings to ead, unt I laid down on de floor of de cabin, vishing I vas Pontius Pilate, so dat I gould grucify efery man in de Southern Gonfederisy. Especially Pob Smiles. An hour or two later I heard Pob Smiles swearing again.

"Make oud de names of all de brisoners I haf,' he vas saying, 'mit vhere dey pelong unt de charges against dem. I gan't. Do dey take me for a counter-jumping clerk? I didn't gome into de army to be a white-faced bookkeeper. I sbrained my thumb de udder tay, unt I gan't wride efen a little bit. Vhat am I to do?"

"Dat vas all moonshine apout his sbraining his thumb. He vas ignorant as a chackass. If he hat 40 thumbs he gouldn't wride efen his own name so's anypoddy gould reat id.

"I don't pelieve dere's a man in a mile of here dat gan make oud such a list,' he vent on. 'Dey're all a set of hominy-eating plockheadts. Berhaps dat hook-nosed Chew might. He's de man. I'll make him do it, or preak his schwindling headt.'

"He gome in, kicked me, unt made me get up, unt den dook me out unt set me down at a dable, vhere he hat baber, ben unt ink, unt ordered me to dake down de names off de brisoners as he prought dem up. He'd look ofer my shoulter as I wrode, as if he vas reading vhat I set down, but I knowed dat he gouldn't make oud a letter. I vas dempted to wride all sorts of things apout him, but I didn't, for I vas in enough droubles alretty. Vhen I gome to my own name, he said:

"Make de charge, a spy, a thief, unt a Dutch traitor to the Southern Gonfederisy.'

"I yoost wrode: 'Lefi Rosenbaum, Memphis, Tenn. Merchant. No charge.'

"He scowled very wisely ad id, unt Bretended to read id, unt said:

"Id's lucky for you dat you wrode id yoost as I told you. I'd a' proke effery pone in your poddy if you hadn't.

"I'd yoost got done vhen an officer come down from Headquarters for it. He looked it ofer unt said:

"Who mate dis oud?"

"Vhy, I mate id oud," said Pob Smiles, pold as prass.

"But who wrode id?" said de officer.

"O, I sbrained my thumb, so I gouldn't wride very vell, unt I mate a Chew brisoner gopy id," said Pob Smiles.

"Id's de pest wriding I haf seen," said de officer. I vant de man vhat wrode id to go mit me to Headquarters at vunce. I haf some gopying dere to pe done at vunce, unt not vun of dem gorn-grackers dat I haf up dere gan wride anydings fit to read. Pring dat man oud here unt I vill dake him mit me.'

"Pob Smiles hated to led me go, bud he gouldn't help himself, unt I vent mit de officer. I vas so dired I gould hartly move a sdep, unt I felt I gould nod wride a word. But I seemed to see a chance ad Headquarters, unt I determined to make efery effort to do somedings. Dey gif me a sdiff horn of whisky unt sed me to vork. Dey wanted me to make oud unt gopy a gonsolidated rebort off de army.

"I almost forgot I vas dired when I found oud vat dey wanted, for I saw a chance to get somedings of kreat value. Dey'd peen drying to make up a rebort vrom all sorts of scraps unt sheeds of baper sent in from de tiffer-ent Headquarters, unt dey had sboiled a half-dozen pig sheeds of baper after dey'd got dem bartly done. If I do say id myselluf, I gan wride bedder unt faster unt vigure gwicker dan most any man you efer saw. Dose reppels

thought dey hat got hold of a vonder—a lighdning galgulator unt lighdning benman togedder.

“As vast as I vould gopy vun baper, unt it vould prove to be all righd, I vould vold it up unt stick it into a pig yaller envelope. I also volded up de sboiled reborts, unt stuck dem in de envelope, saying dat I wanted to ket rid of dem—put dem vhere seeing dem vouldn’t bodder me. I garefully slipped de envelope unter de edge of a bile of bapers near de edge of de dable. I hat anodder big yaller envelope dat looked yoost like it lying in de mittle of de dable, into vvhich I sduck bapers dat didn’t amount to noddings. I vas very slick apout it, unt didn’t led dem see dat I hat two envelopes.

“Id vas bast midnight vhen I got de gonsolidated rebort made oud, unt de reppels vas tickled to death mit id. Dey’d nefer seen anyding so vell done pefore. Dey wanted a gopy made to keep, unt I said I’d make vun, though I vas nearly dead for sleep. I really vasn’t, for de eggscitement made me forget all apout peing dired.

“I vass determined, pevore I slept, to haf dat yellow envelope, mit all dose bapers, in Cheneral Curtis’s hands, though he vas 40 miles afay. How in de vorldt I vas koing to do id I gould not think, but I vas koing to do id, if I tied a drying. De virst thing vas to ket dat envelope off de dable into my glothes; de next, to ket oud of dat cabin, afay vrom Pob Smiles unt his guards, through de reppel lines, unt ofer de mountains to Cheneral Curtis’s gamp. Id vas a dark, vindy nighd, unt dings vere in gonfusion apout de gamp—yoost de kind of a dime vhen anypody mighd kill a Chew pedler, unt no questions vould pe asked.

“I hat got de last gopy vinished, unt de officers vas going ofer id. Dey hat deir heads togedder, nod 18 inches vrom me, agross de dable. I hat my vingers on de envelope, but I didn’t dare slib id oud, though my vingers

itched. I vas in hopes dat dey'd turn aroundt, or do somedings dat'd gif me a chance.

"Suttenly Pob Smiles opened de door vide, unt valked in, mit a dispatch in his hand. De vind svept in, plew de gandles oud, unt sent de bapers vlying apout de room. Some vent into de vire. De officers yelled unt svore at him, unt he shut de door, but I hat de envelope in my preast-bocket.

"Den, to ket afay. How in the name of Moses unt de Den Gommandments vas I to do dat?

"Vun of de officers said to Pob Smiles: 'Dake dis man afay unt dake goot gare of him until do-morrow. Ve'll vant him again. Gif him a goot bet, unt blenty to ead, unt dreat him vell. Ve'll need him do-morrow.'

"'Gome on, you bork-hating Chew,' said Pob Smiles crabbedly. "I'll gif you a mess of spare-ribs unt gorn-dodgers for subber.'

"'You'll do noddings of de kind,' said de officer. 'I tolt you to dreat him vell, unt if you don't dreat him vell, I'll see apout id. Gif him a ped in dat house vhere de orderlies sday.'

"Pob Smiles crumbled unt svore ad me, after ve vent oud, but dere vas noddings to do but to opey orders. He gif me a goot place, unt some coffee unt pread, unt I lay down, bretending to go to sleep. I snored afay like a goot feller, unt bresently I heard some vun gome in. I looked a little oud de gorner of my eye, unt see py de light of de vire dat id vas Pob Smiles sneaking pack. He vatched me for a minnit, unt den put his hand on me.

"I vas sgared as I nefer vas, for I thought he vas after my brexious yaller envelope. But I dought of my bowie knife, which I alfays garried oud of sight in my posom, unt resolfed dat I would sdick id in his heart, if he dried to dake afay my bapers. But I nefer moved. He felt ofer me undil he gome to de bocket vhere I hat de siller

tollars, unt den slipped his vingers in, unt bulled dem oud, vun py vun, yoost as chently as if he vas smoothing the hair on a cat. I led him dake dem all, mitout moving a muscle. I vas glat to haf him dake dem. I knowed dat he vas blaying boker somevhere, unt hat run oud of gash, unt vould dake my money unt go pack to his game.

"As soon as I heard his vootsteps tisabbear in de distance, I kot up unt sneaked down to vhere de Headquarter horses were died. I must get a fresh vun, pekause my own vas blayed nearly oud. He vould nefer do to garry me ofer de rough roads I must rite pefore morning. But vhen I got dere I saw a guart bacing up unt down in vront of dem. I hat not gounted on dis, unt for a minnit my heart stood still. Dere vere no odder horses anyvheres around.

"I hesidated, looked up at Headquarters, unt saw de lighds sdillurning dere unt made up my mind at vunce to risk efervthing on vun desperate chance. I remempered dat I hat but in my envelope some plank sheeds of baper, mit 'Headquarters Army of de Vrontier,' unt a reppel vlag on dem. Dere vas a pig vireurning ofer to de righd, mit no one near. I vent up in de shadow of a tree, vhere I Gould see by de virelight, dook oud vun off de sheeds of baper unt wrote on id an order to have a horse saddled for me at vunce. Den I slipped pack so dat id vould look as if I vas goming sdraight vrom Headquarters, unt valked up to de guart unt handed him de order. He Gouldn't read a vord, but he recognized de heading on de baper, unt I tolt him de rest. He thought dere vas noddings for him to do but opey.

"Vhile he vas getting de horse I wrote oud, by the vire, a bass for myself through de guards. I vas in a hurry, you bet, unt id vas all done mighty qvick, unt I vas on 'lat horses' pack und sdarted. I hat lost all direction,

but I knowed dat I hat to go chenerally to de northeast to get to Cheneral Curtis. But I got confused again, unt found I vas ridng around unt around in de gamp mitout ketting oud at all. I efen gome up again near de pig vire, yoost where I wrote oud de pass.

"Yoost den what should I hear but Pob Smile's voice. He had lost all his money—all my money—at boker, unt vas damning de fellers he hat been blaying mit as cheats. He vas nod in a demper to meet, unt I knowed he vould see me if I vent py de pig vire, but I vas desperate, unt I sduck de spurs into my horse unt he shot ahead. I heard Pob Smiles yell:

"Dere is dat Chew. Where is he koing? Halt, dere! Sdop him?"

"I knowed dat if I shtopped now I vould be hung sure. De only safety vas to go as fast as I gould. I dashed afay, where, I didn't know. Direckly a guard halted me, but I showed him my bass, unt he led me go on. While he vas looking at it I sdrained my ears, unt gould hear horses galloping my vay. I knowed it vas Pob Smiles after me. My horse vas a good vun, unt I determined to get on de main road unt go as vast as I gould. I gould see by de gampvires dat I vas now ketting afay from de army, unt I pegin to hope dat I vas going north. I kept my horse running.

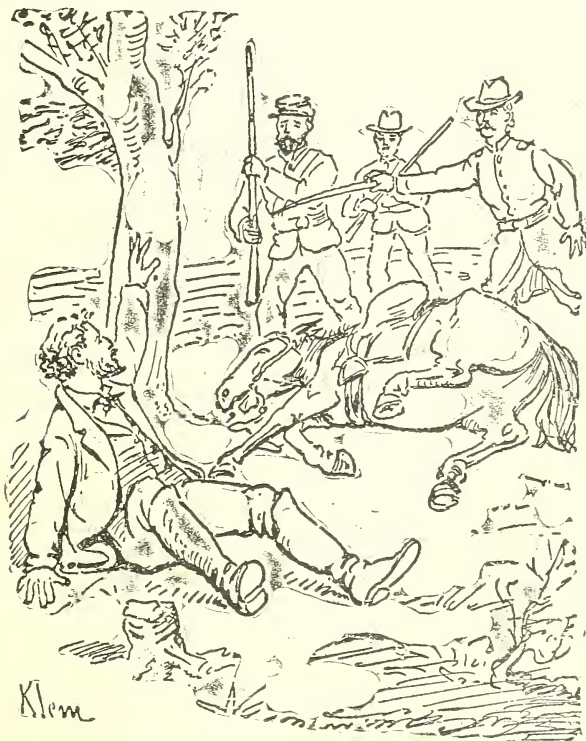
"Bretty soon de pickets halted me, but I didn't sdop to answer dem. I yoost bolted ahead. De chances of deir shooding me vasn't as treadiul as of Pob Smiles catching me. Dey vired at me, but I galloped right through dem, unt through a rain of pullets dat dey sent after me. I velt petter then for I vas confident dat I vas oud in de open gountry, but I kept my horse on de run. Id seemed to me dat I vent a hundret miles.

"Yoost as de tay vas preaking in de east, I heard a voice, mit a sdrong Cherman agcent call oud de prush:

"Halt. Who gomes dere?"

I vas so glat dat I almost vainted, for I knowed dat I'd reached Cheneral Sigel's pickets. I gouldn't ket my lips to answer.

Dere game a lot of shots, unt vun of dem sdruck my horse in de head, unt he vell in de road, throwing me ofer his head. De pickets run oud unt bicked me up. De Cherman language sounded de sweetest I efer heard it.



ROSENBAUM RUNS INTO SIGEL'S PICKETS.

"As soon as I gould make myself dalk, I answered dem in Cherman, unt tolt dem who I vas. Den dey gouldn't do enough for me. Dey helped me pack to vhere dey gould get an ambulance, in vvhich dey sent me to Head-

quarters, for I vas too veak to ride or valk a sdep. I handed my yellow envelope to Cheneral Curtis, got a dram of vhiskey to keep me up vwhile I answered his questions, unt den vent to sleep unt slept through de whole pattle of Bea Ridge.

"After de pattle, Cheneral Curtis vanted to know how much he ought to bay me, but I tolt him dat all I vanted vas to serfe de gountry, unt I vas alretty baid many dimes ofer, py helping him vin a victory.

But I gongluded dat dere vas to much Pob Smiles in dat gountry for me, unt I hat better leave for some parts vwhere I vas not likely to meed him. So I grossed de Mississippi Riffer, unt choined Chenerl Rosecrans's Headquarters.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BOYS GO OUT ON AN EXPEDITION WITH MR. LEVI ROSENBAUM.

Mr. Rosenbaum's stories of adventure were not such as to captivate the boys with the career of a spy. But the long stay in camp was getting very tedious, and they longed for something to break the monotony of camp guard and of work on the interminable fortifications. Therefore, when Mr. Rosenbaum came over one morning with a proposition to take them out on an expedition, he found them ready to go. He went to Regimental Headquarters, secured a detail for them, and returning to the Hoosier's Rest found the boys lugubriously pulling over a pile of homespun garments they had picked up among the teamsters and camp-followers.

"I suppose we've got to wear 'em, Shorty," said Si, looking very disdainfully at a butternut-colored coat and vest. "But I'd a heap rather wear a mustard plaster. It'd be a heap comfortabler."

"I aint myself finicky about clothes," answered Shorty. "I aint no swell—never was. But somehow I've got a prejudice in favor of blue as a color, and agin gray and brown. I only like gray and brown on a corpse. They make purty grave clothes. I always like to bury a man what has butternut clothes on."

"Vhat are you doing mit dem tiri'y rags, poys?" asked Rosenbaum, in astonishment, as he surveyed the scene.

"Why, we've got to wear 'em, haven't we, if we go out with you?" asked Si.

"You vear dem vhen you ko oud mit me—you tisguise yourselfs," said Rosenbaum, with fine scorn. "You'd

blay ter teffel in tisqueise. You can't tisqueise your tongues. Dat's de vorst. Anypody'd catch on to dat Intianny lingo virst thing. You've kot to sbeak like an etchucated man—sbeak like I do—to keep beoples vrom vinding oud vhere you're from. I sbeak gorrect English alfays. Nopody gan dell vhere I'm vrom."

The boys had hard work controlling their risibles over Mr. Rosenbaum's self-complacency.

"What clothes are we to wear, then?" asked Si, much puzzled.

"Vear vhat you blese; vear de glothes you haf on, or anything else. Dis is nod koing to be a vull-dress affair. Gentlemen ~~van~~ attend in deir vorking glothes if dey vant to."

"I don't understand," mumbled Si.

"Of gourse you don't," said Rosenbaum gaily. "If you did, you vould know as much as I do, unt I vouldn't haf no advantage."

"All right," said Shorty. "We've decided to go it blind. Go ahead. Fix it up to suit yourself. We are your buckleberries for anything that you kin turn up. It all goes in our \$13 a month."

"O. K.," answered Rosenbaum. "Dat's de righd vay. Drust me, unt I vill pring you oud all sdraighd. Now led me dell you somedings. When ~~you~~ gapchured me, after a hard struggle, as you rememper (and he gave as much of a wink as his prominent Jewish nose would admit), I ~~vas~~ an officer on Chenereal Roddey's staff. It vas, unt sdili is, my pizness to keep up express lines py vvhich de repels are subblid mit qvinine, medicines, gun-gaps, ledders, gifting invormation, unt odder things. Unt I do id."

The boys opened their eyes wide, and could not restrain an exclamation of surprise.

"Now, holt your horses; don'd ket eggscited," said

Rosenbaum calmly. "You don'd know as much apout var as I do—not py a hundred per cent. Dese things are alfays done in efery var, unt Cheneral Rosecrans understands de dricks of var pedder as any man in de army. He peads dem all vhen id gomes to gedding invormation apout de enemy. He knows dat a dog dat vetches must garry, unt dat de pest vay is to led a sby take a liddle to de enemy, unt pring a goot deal pack.

"De droubles at de pattle of Sdone Rifer was dat de sbies took more to Cheneral Pragg dan dey prought to Cheneral Rosecrans. But Cheneral Rosecrans vas new to de vork den. Id won'd pe so in future. He knows a kreat deal more apout de reppels now dan dey know apout him, danks to such men as me."

"I don't know as we ought to have anything to do with this, Shorty," said Si dubiously. "At least, we ought to inquire of the Colonel first."

"Dat's all righd—dat's all righd," said Rosenbaum quickly. "I've got de order vrom de Colonel which vill sadisfy you. Read id yourselfs."

He handed the order to Si, who looked carefully at the printed heading, "Headquarters, 200th Ind., near Murfreesboro', Tenn.," and then read the order aloud to Shorty: "Corporal Josiah Klegg and one private, whom he may select, will report to Mr. Levi Rosenbaum for special duty, and will obey such orders and instructions as he may give, and on return report to these Headquarters. By order of the Colonel. Philip Blake, Adjutant."

"That seems all straight, Shorty," said Si, folding up the order, and putting it in his pocket.

"Straight as a string," assented Shorty. "I'm ready, anyway. Go ahead, Mr. Cheap Clothing. I don't care much what it is, so long's it aint shovelin' and diggin' on the fortifications. I'll go down to Tullahoma and pull

old Bragg out of his tent rather than handle a pick and shovel any longer."

"Vell, as I vas koing to dell you, I have been pack to Tullahoma seferal dimes since you gaptured me, unt I haf got de exbress lines between here unt dere running bretty vell. I haf hat to dell dem all sorts of sdories how I got afay vrom de Yankees. Luckily, I haf a bretty goot imagination, unt can vurnish dem mit virst-glass narratives.

"But dere is vun veller on de staff dat I'm avraid of. His name is Poke Bolivar, unt he is a derrible veller, I dell you. Alfays vull of vight, unt desperate vhen he kets into a vight. I've seen him pluff all dose odder vellers. He is a red-hot Secessionist, unt wants to kill efery Yankee in de gountry. Of late he has seemed very suspicious of me, unt has said lots of dings dat egared me. I vant to seddle him, either kill him or take him prisoner unt keep him away, so's I gan veel at ease vhen I'm in Cheneral Pragg's gamp. I gan't do dat so long as I know he's aroundt, for I veel dat his eyes are on me, unt dat he's hunting some vay to drip me up.

"I'm koing oud now to meet him, at a house apoud five miles vrom de lines. I haf my bockets unt de bockets on my saddles vull of ledders unt dings. Yoost outside de lines I vill ket some more. He vill meet me unt ve vill ko pack to Tullahoma togedder—dat is, if he don't kill me pefore ve get dere. I haf prought a gouple of revolfers, in addition to your guns, for Poke Bolivar's a derrible veller to vight, unt I vant you to make sure of him. I'd dake more'n two men oud, but I'm avraid he'd get on to so many."

"I guess we two kin handle him," said Shorty, slipping his belt into the holster of the revolver and buckling it on. "Give us a fair show at him, and we don't want no

help. I wouldn't mind having it out with Mr. Bolivar all by myself."

"Vell, my blan is for you to ko oud by yourselves to dat blace where you vere on bicket. Den dake de right-hand road through the crick bottom, as if you vere koing foraging. Apout two miles vrom de crick you vill see a pig hewed-log house sdanding on de left of de road. You vill know it py its having brick outside chimneys, unt de doors bainted plue and yaller. Dere's no odder house in dat gountry like id.

"You're to keep oud of sight as much as you gan. Directly you vill see me gome riding oud, vollered py a nigger riding anodder horse. I vill ko up to de house, chump off, die my horse, ko inside, unt bresently gome oud ant die a vwhite cloth to a post on de borch. Dat vill pe a sicknal to Poke Bolivar, who vill pe vatching vrom de hill a mile ahead. You vill see him gome in, ket off his horse, unt ko into de house.

"Py dis dime it vill pe dark, or nearly so. You slip up as quietly as you gan, righd py de house, hiding yourselfs behint de lilacs. If de dogs run at you payonet dem. You gan look through de vinders, unt see me unt Bolivar sidding py de vire dalking, unt ketting ready to sdart for Tullahoma as soon as de nigger who is gooking our subber in de kitchen oudside kets id ready unt ve ead id. You gan vait dill you see us sit down to ead subber, unt den chump us. Petter vait until ve are bretty near through subber, for I'll pe very hungry, unt vant all I gan ket to keep me up for my long ride.

"You run in unt order us to surrenter. I'll chump up unt plaze afay mit my revolver, but you needn't bay much attention to me—only pe gareful not to shood me. While you are tending to Bolivar I'll ket on my horse unt skip oud. You gan kill Bolivar, or dake him pack to gamp mit you, or do anything dat you blease, so long's

you geeep him afay from Tullahoma. You understandt, now?"

"Perfectly," said Shorty. "I think we can manage it, and it looks like a pretty good arrangement. You are to git away, and we're to git Mr. Bolivar. Those two things are settled. Any change in the evening's program will depend on Mr. Bolivar. If he wants a fight he kin git whole gobs of it."

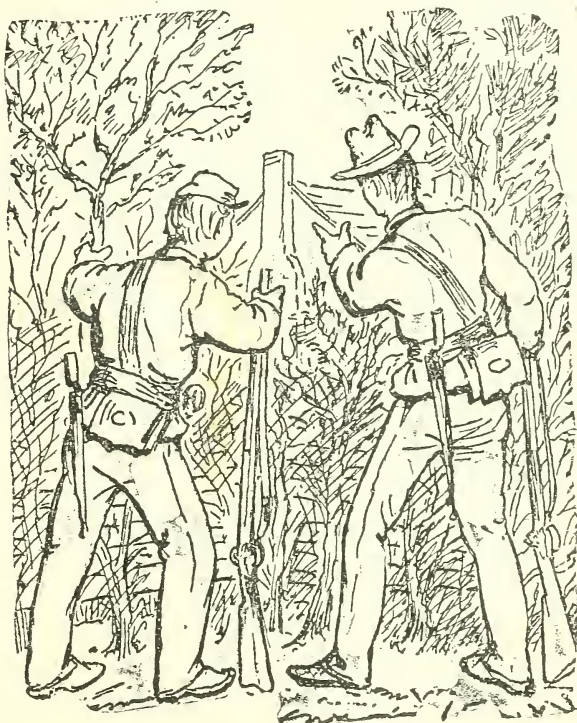
Going over the plan again, to make sure that the boys understood it, and cautioning them once more as to the sanguinary character of Polk Bolivar, Mr. Rosenbaum started for his horse. He had gone but a little ways when he came back with his face full of concern.

"I like you poys bedder as I gan dell you," he said, taking their hands affectionately, "unt I nefer vould forgif myself if you got hurt. Do you dink dat two of you'll pe aple to manage Poke Bolivar? If you're nod sure I'll ket annoder man to help you. I dink I had pedder, anyfay."

"O, go along with you," said Shorty scornfully. "Don't worry about us and Mr. Bolivar. I'd stack Si Klegg up against any man that ever wore gray, in any sort of a scrimmage he could put up, and I'm a better man than Si. You just favor us with a meeting with Mr. Bolivar, and then git out o' the way. If it wasn't for dividing up fair with my partner here I'd go out by myself and tackle Mr. Bolivar. You carry out your share of the plan, and don't worry about us."

Rosenbaum's countenance brightened, and he hastened to mount and away. The boys shouldered their guns and started out for the long walk. They followed Rosenbaum's directions carefully, and arrived in sight of the house, which they recognized at once, and got into a position from which they could watch its front. Presently they saw Rosenbaum come riding along the road.

and stop in front of the house. He tied his horse to a scraggy locust tree, went in and then reappeared and fastened the signal to a post supporting the roof of the porch.



WATCHING THE HOUSE.

They had not long to wait for the answer. Soon a horseman was seen descending from the distant hill. As he came near he was anxiously scanned, and appeared a cavalier so redoubtable as to fully justify Rosenbaum's apprehensions. He was a tall, strongly-built young man, who sat on his spirited horse with easy and complete mastery of him. Even at that distance it could be seen that he was heavily armed.

"Looks like a genuine fighter, and no mistake," said Si, examining the caps on his revolver. "He'll be a stiff one to tackle."

"We must be mighty careful not to let him get the drop on us," said Shorty. "He looks quicker'n lightnin', and I've, no doubt that he kin shoot like Dan'l Boone. We might drop him from here with our guns," he added, suggestively.

"No," said Si, "that wouldn't be fair. And it wouldn't be the way Rosenbaum wants it done. He's got his reasons for the other way. Besides, I'd be a great deal better satisfied in my mind, if I could have it out with him, hand-to-hand. It'd sound much better in the regiment."

"Guess that's so," assented Shorty. "Well, let's sneak up to the house."

When they got close to the house they saw that it had been deserted; there were no dogs or other domestic animals about, and this allowed them to get under the shade of the lilacs without discovery. The only inmates were Rosenbaum and Bolivar, who were seated before a fire, which Rosenbaum had built in the big fireplace in the main room. The negro was busy cooking supper in the outbuilding which served as a kitchen. The glass was broken out the window, and they could hear the conversation between Rosenbaum and Bolivar.

It appeared that Rosenbaum had been making a report of his recent doings, to which Bolivar listened with a touch of disdain mingled with suspicion.

The negro brought in the supper, and the men ate it sitting by the fire.

"I declare," said Bolivar, stopping with a piece of bread and meat in one hand and a tin-cup of coffee in the other, "that for a man who is devoted to the South

you can mix up with these Yankees with less danger to yourself and to them than any man I ever knew. You never get hurt, and you never hurt any of them. That's a queer thing for a soldier. War means hurting people, and getting hurt yourself. It means taking every chance to hurt some of the enemy. I never miss any opportunity of killing a Yankee, no matter what I may be doing, or what risk it is to me. I can't help myself. Whenever I see a Yankee in range I let him have it. I never go near their lines without killing at least one."

Shorty's thumb played a little with his gunlock, but Si restrained him with a look.



BOLIVAR AND ROSENBAUM.

"Vell," said Rosenbaum, "I hates de enemy as padly as any vun gan, but I allays haf pizness more imbortant at de dime dan killing men. I vant to get through mit

what I haf to do, unt led odder men do de killing. Dere's enough chentlemen like you for dat vork."

"No, there's not enough," said Bolivar savagely. "It's treasonable for you to say so. Our enemies outnumber us everywhere. It is the duty of every true Southern man to kill them off at every chance, like he would rattlesnakes and wolves. You are either not true to the South, or you haint the right kind of grit. Why, you have told me yourself that you let two Yankees capture you, without firing a shot. Think of it; a Confederate officer captured by two Yankee privates, without firing a shot."

"Dey hat de dead drop on me," murmured Rosenbaum. "If I hat moved dey'd killed me sure."

"Dead drop on you!" repeated Bolivar scornfully. "Two men with muskets have the dead drop on you! And you had a carbine and revolver. Why, I have ridden into a nest of 10 or 15 Yankees, who had me covered with their guns. I killed three of them, wounded three others, and run the rest away with my empty revolver. If I'd had another revolver, not one would've got away alive. I always carry two revolvers now."

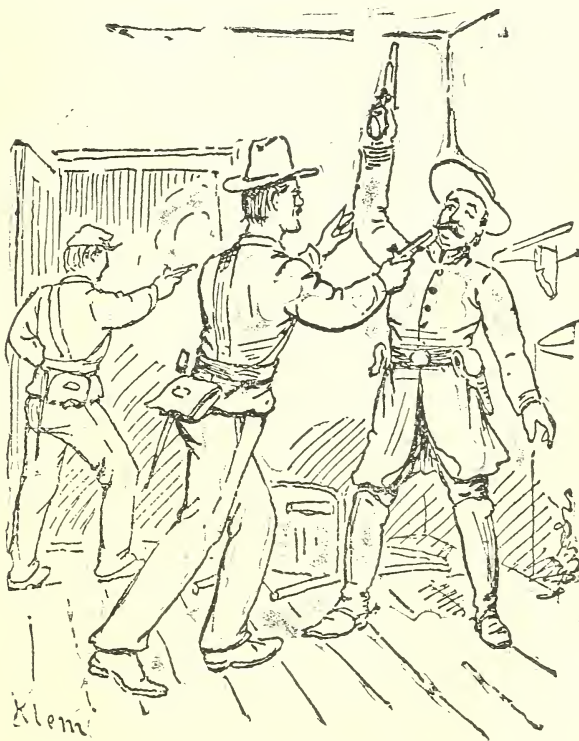
"I think our guns'll be in the way in that room," said Shorty, setting his down. His face bore a look of stern determination. "They're too long. I'm itching to have it out with that feller hand-to-hand. We'll rush in. You pretend to be goin' for Rosenbaum and leave me to have it out with Mr. Bolivar. Don't you mix in at all. If I don't settle him he ought to be allowed to go."

"No," said Si decisively. "I'm your superior officer, and it's my privilege to have the first shy at him. I'll 'tend to him. I want a chance single-handed at a man that talks that way. You take care of Rosenbaum."

"We mustn't dispute," said Shorty, stooping down and picking up a couple of straws, "Here, pull. The feller

that gits the longest 'tends to Bolivar; the other to Rosenbaum."

Si drew and left the longer straw in Shorty's hand. They drew their revolvers and rushed for the room, Shorty leading. Rosenbaum and Bolivar sprang up in alarm at the sound of their feet on the steps, and drew their revolvers.



THE SURPRISE.

"Surrender, you infernal rebels," shouted the boys, as they bolted in through the door.

With the quickness of a cat, Rosenbaum had sidled near the door through which they had come. Suddenly

he fired two shots into the ceiling, and sprang through the door so quickly that Si had merely the chance to fire a carefully-aimed shot through the top of his hat. Si jumped toward the door again, and fired a shot in the air, for still further make-believe. He would waste no more, but reserve the other four for Bolivar, if he should need them.

Shorty confronted Bolivar with fierce eyes and leveled revolver, eagerly watching every movement and expression. The rebel was holding his pistol pointed upward, and his eyes looked savage. As his eyes met Shorty's the latter was amazed to see him close the left with a most emphatic wink. Seeing this was recognized, the rebel fired two shots into the ceiling, and motioned with his left hand to Si to continue firing. Without quite understanding, Si fired again. The rebel gave a terrific yell and fired a couple of shots out the window.

"Do the same," he said to Shorty, who complied, as Si had done, in half-comprehension. The rebel handed his revolver to Shorty, stepped to the window and listened.

There came the sounds of two horses galloping away on the hard, rocky road.

"He's gone, and taken the nigger with him," he said contentedly, turning from the window, and giving another fierce yell. "Better fire the other two shots out of that pistol, to hurry him along."

Shorty fired the remaining shots out of the rebel's revolver.

"What regiment do you belong to, boys?" asked Bolivar calmly.

"The 200th Ind.," answered Si, without being able to control his surprise.

"A very good regiment," said the rebel. "What's your company?"

"Co. Q," answered Si.

"Who's your Colonel?"

"Col. Duckworth."

"Who's your Captain?"

"Capt. McGillicuddy."

"All right," said the rebel, with an air of satisfaction. "I asked you those questions to make sure you were genuine Yankees. One can't be too careful in my business. I'm in the United States Secret Service, and have to be constantly on the watch to keep it from being played on me by men pretending to be Yankees when they are rebels, and rebels when they are Yankees. I always make it the first point to ask them the names of their officers. I know almost all the officers in command on both sides."

"You in the Secret Service?" exploded the boys. They were on the point of adding "too," but something whispered to them not to betray Rosenbaum.

"Yes," answered Bolivar. "I've just come from Tullahoma, where I've been around Bragg's Headquarters. I wanted to get inside our lines, but I was puzzled how to do it. That Jew you've just run off bothered me. I wish to the Lord you'd killed him. I'm more afraid of him than any other man in Bragg's army. He's smart as a briar, always nosing around where you don't want him, and anxious to do something to commend him to Headquarters, Jew like. I've thought he suspected me, for he'd been paying special attention to me for some weeks. Two or three times I've been on the point of tolling him out into the woods somewhere and killing him, and so get rid of him. It's all right now. He'll go back to Tullahoma with a fearful story of the fight I made against you, and that I am probably killed. I'll turn up there in a week or two with my own story, and I'll give him fits for having skipped out and left me to fight you

two alone. Say, it's a good ways to camp. Let's start at once, for I want to get to Headquarters as soon as possible."

"You've got another revolver there," said Si, who had prudently reloaded his own weapon.

"That's so," said Bolivar, pulling it out. "You can take and carry it or I'll take the cylinder out, if you are not convinced about me."

"You'd better let me carry it," said Shorty, shoving the revolver in his own belt. "These are queer times, and one can't be too careful with rebels who claim to be Yankees, and Yankees who claim to be rebels."

They trudged back to camp, taking turns riding the horse. When the rebel rode, however, one of the boys walked alongside with the bridle in his hand. All doubts as to Bolivar's story were dispelled by his instant recognition by the Provost-Marshal, who happened to be at the picket-post when they reached camp.

"The longer I live," remarked Shorty, as they made their way along to the Hoosier's Rest, "and I seem to live a little longer every day, the less I seem to understand about this war."

Shorty spoke as if he had had an extensive acquaintance with wars.

"The only thing that I've come to be certain about," assented Si, "is that you sometimes most always can't generally tell."

And they proceeded to get themselves some supper, accompanying the work with denunciations of the Commissary for the kind of rations he was drawing for the regiment, and of the Orderly-Sergeant for his letting the other Orderlies eucher him out of the company's fair share.

CHAPTER XXVII.

RECEIVES A LETTER FROM HIS FATHER AND THE FAMILY.
TROUBLES IN GETTING HOME WITH ABRAHAM LINCOLN.
MATTERS ON THE OLD FARM.

One morning the Orderly-Sergeant handed Si the following letter:

Deer Son: I got hoam safely a weke ago, thanks 2 all-protecting Providens; likewise 2 about 175 pound of tuff & helthy Josiah Klegg. Providens helpt rite along, but it tuk 50-year-old Injianny hickory & whit-leather 2 pull through sum ov the tite plasis.

Abraham Lincoln is as strong as an ox, but I never thought that anything that diddent wear horns or chew the cud could be so measly dumb. He kin eat as much as Buck, our off-steer, & I declare I don't believe he knows any mōre.

We had only bin on the train long enuff for Abe to finish up the whole of the 3 days rations you provided us with 2 last us home, when I notist that Blowhard Billings was on board. He was still dressed in full uniform, & playin off officer yit, but I happened 2 recolleck that he was no officer no more, & it wuz lucky that I done so. He wuz lookin at me & Abe hard with them mean, cat-fish ize ov hizn.

Jest as a matter ov precaushon, I made Abe change seats with me & taik the inside. Billings caim up. You know what I thought ov him ov old, & there's never bin any love lost betwixt us sence I stopped him cheatin poor Eli Mitchell outen his plow-team. I told him then that the coppers on a dead nigger's eyes wuzzent saif when he wuz around, & I woulddent trust him ez fur ez I

could sling a bull by the tale. He got mad at this & never got over it. I never encouraged him to. I wouldnt feel satisfied with myself if he wuzzent mad at me. I couldnt change my opinion even when he tried to steal into respectability by goin into the army. I knowed he'd do anything but fite, & wouldnt've bin supprized any day by hearing that him and all the mules in camp had disappeared together.

Presently Billings he cum up very corjil like & says: "Howdy, Deacon. I hope you air very well."

I told him I wuz tollable peart, and he says:

"I see a man in the third car forward that wuz inquiring for you, and wanted to see you powerful bad."

"That so?" says I, unconcernedlike.

"Yes," says he. "He wuz awful anxious to see you, and I said I'd send you to him if I cum acrost you."

Somehow, I dropped onto it in a minnit that he wuz schemin' to git me away from Abraham Lincoln.

"Well," says I, "it's about ez fur for me forward to him as it is for him back here to me. I don't know as I want to see him at all. If he wants to see me so bad let him cum back here."

"I think I'd go forward and see him," said Billings, sort ov impatient-like. "You'll have no trouble finding him. He's in the third car from here, up at the front end, right-hand side, next to the water-cooler. He inquired most partickerlerly for you."

"Probably wants 2 borry money," says I, without stirrin'. "Men that want particularly 2 see you always do. Well, I haint got none 2 lend—haint got no more'n'll taik me hoam."

"You'd better go forward & see him," he said very bossy like, as if he was orderin me.

"I'd better stay right here, & I'm a-goin' to stay," says I, so decided ~~that~~ Billings see that it was no use.

His patience gave clean away.

"Look here, Klegg," said he, mad as a hornet, "I'm after that ere nigger you're trying to steal away into Injianny, and by the holy poker I'm goin' to have him! Come along here, you black ape," and he laid his hand on Abe Lincoln's collar. Abe showed the white ov his izes as big as buckeyes, put his arm around the piece betwixt the winders, and held on for deer life. I see by the grip he tuk that the only way 2 git him wuz 2 tear out the side of the car, and I thought I'd let them tussle it out for a minnit or 2.

The others in the car, who thought it grate fun to see a Lieutenant-Kurnel wrastlin' with a nigger, laffed and yelled:

"Go it, nigger,"

"Go it, Kurnel,"

"Grab a root,"

"He bet on the nigger if the car is stout enuf," and sich. Jest then Groundhog cum runnin' up to help Billings, and reached over and ketched Abe, but I hit him a good biff with the musket that changed his mind. Billings turned on me, and called out to the others:

"Men, I order you to arrest this man and tie him up."

Sum ov them seemed a-mind to obey, but I sung out:

"Feller-citizens, he ain't no officer—no more'n I am. He ain't got no right to wear shoulder-straps, and he knows it as well as I do."

At this they all turned agin him & begun yellin at him 2 put his head in a bag. He turned 2 me savage as a meat-ax, but I ketched him by the throat, & bent him back over the seat. The Provo-Guard cum up, & I explained it 2 them, & showed my passes for me & Abe. So they made us all sit down & keep quiet.

Bineby we got 2 Nashville. Abe Lincoln wuz hungry, & I stopped 2 git him something 2 eat. My gracious, the

lot ov ham & aigs at 50 cents a plate & sandwiches at 25 cents a piece that contraband kin eat. He never seemed 2 git full. He looked longingly at the pies, but I let him look. I wazzent runnin no Astor House in connexion with the Freedmen's buro.

We walked through the city, crost on the ferry, and wuz jest gittin in the cars which wuz about ready 2 start, when up comes Billings agin, with 2 or 3 other men in citizen's cloze. One ov these claps his hand on my shoulder & says:

"I'm a Constable, & I arrest you in the name ov the State ov Tennessee for abductin a slave. Make' no trubble, but come along with me."

I jest shook him off, & clumb onto the platform, pullin Abe after me. The Constable & his men follered us, but I got Abe Lincoln inside the door, shet it, & made him put his shoulders agin it. The Constable & his 2 assistants wuz buttin away at it, & me grinnin at them when the train pulled out, & they had 2 jump off. I begin 2 think there wuz something good in Abe Lincoln after all, & when we stopped at an eatin-plais, about half-way 2 Louisville, & Abe looked at the grub as if he haddent had a mouthful sence the war begun, I busted a \$2-bill all 2 pieces gittin' him a little supper. If I wuz goin into the bizniss ov freein slaves I'd want 2 have a mule train haulin grub follering me at every step.

Abe wuz awful hungry agin when we reached Louisville, but I found a place where a dollar would buy him enough pork & beans 2 probably last him over the river.

But I begun 2 be afeard that sum nosin pryin Mike Medler might make trubble in gitting Abe safely acrost the Ohio. I tuk him 2 a house, & laid it down strong 2 him that he must stay inside all day, and 2 make sure I bargained with the woman 2 keep him eating as much as she could. It ruined a \$5 bill, & even then Abe looked as

if he could hold some more. I've always made it a pint 2 lend 2 the Lord for the benefit ov the heathen as much as my means would allow, but I begun 2 think that my missionary contribushons this year would beat what I was layin out on my fambly.

After it got dark, me & Abe meandered down through the streets 2 the ferry. There wuzent many people out except soljers, & I've got 2 feel purty much at home with them. They seem more likely 2 think ~~more~~ nearly my way than folks in every-day clothes.

There wuz quite a passel ov soljers on the wharf-boat waitin' for the ferry when we got there. They saw at wuns that I had probably bin down 2 the front 2 see my son, & so sum ov them axed me 2 what rigiment he belonged. When I told them the 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry they all made friends with me at wunst, for they said they knowed it wuz a good rijiment.

Bineby a big, important-lookin' man, with a club with a silver head for a cane, cum elbowin through the crowd & scowling at everybody as if he owned the wharf-boat & all on it. He stopped in frunt ov Abraham Lincoln & says very sharp & cross:

"Boy, where did you come from?"

Abe diddent say nothin'. His ize got all white, he grinned sort ov scared like, showed his white teeth, & looked sickly over at me. I spoke up & says:

"I brung him along with me from Murfreesboro."

"So I sposed," said he. "He's a slave you're tryin 2 steal from his master. You can't do it. I'll jest take charge ov him myself. That's my dooty here," & he ketched hold ov Abraham Lincoln's collar. Abe, in his scare, put out his arms to ketch hold ov something, & throwed them around the big important man, & lifted him clean offen his feet. I never before realized how strong Abe wuz. The soljers gethered around, purty

mad, & then laffin & yellin when they see the man in Abe's arms. Suddenly sum one hollered:

"Throw him overboard; throw him in the river."

Abe wuz wuss scared than ever when he found he had the man in his arms. He wuz afeared 2 hold on & still more afeared 2 let go. He heard them hollerin, & thought he had 2 do jest as they said, & begun edgin toward the river.

The man got more scared than Abe. He began kickin & wrigglin & hollerin:

"Don't let him do it. Help me. I can't swim a lick."

At this the men hollered worsen ever:

"Throw him in the river! Duck him! Baptize him! Drown him!"

Ime a Baptist, but I don't believe in immersion onless the convert has bin prepared for it, & is willin, which neither this man wuz. I stepped forward 2 make Abe let him down, but before I could do anything Abe had got 2 the edge of the wharf-boat & let go, & plunk went the man into about 10 foot ov water. Abe, scared now nearly 2 death, stood there with his ize biggern sassers and whitern goose-eggs.

In a minnit the man cum up, sputterin & hollerin. A big Sergeant, with his left arm in a sling, reached over & ketched him by the collar & held his head above water.

"If I pull you out will you promis 2 go out ov the nigger-ketchin bizniss forever?" axed the Sergeant.

"Pull me out & then I'll talk 2 you," says the man, grabbin for the slippery sides ov the wharf-boat.

"No, I won't," says the Sergeant, sousin him under water agin.

"Yes, yes, I'll promise," says the man, when he come up agin.

"Will you swear it?" axed the Sergeant.

"Yes, I'll swear it before a Justice or the Peace."

"Will you swear 2 support the Constitution ov the United States agin all enemies & opposers whatsumever, & vote for Abraham Lincoln every time?" axed the Sergeant.

"I'll take the oath ov allegiance," says the man, sputterin the water out ov his mouth," but I'll never vote for that Abolition ape as long as I live."

"Then down you go," says the Sergeant, sousin him agin.

"Yes, yes, I'll vote for Abe Lincoln, & anybody else, if you'll only pull me out," said the man, in a tired tone of voice, when he cum up agin. I begin 2 see that immersion had a great deal ov good in it, even if a man isn't prepared & willin.

"Will you swear 2 always love a nigger as a man & a brother, until death do you part, & aid & comfort all them who are tryin 2 git away from slavery?" axed the Sergeant.

"Dammed if I will," says the man. "No nigger kin ever be a brother 2 me. I'll die first."

"Then you'll die right off," says the Sergeant, sendin him down as far as his long arm would reach & holding him there until I wuz scared for fear he wuz really goin 2 drown the man. When he brung him up the man whimpered:

"Yes, only pull me out—save my life—& I'll do anything you want."

By this time the ferry-boat had cum up. We got aboard & crost over 2 Injianny, & I felt so glad at bein on my nativ soil wuns more that I took Abe up 2 the eatin stand, & blowed in a dollar filin up the vacant plaisis in his hide.

When we tried 2 git on the train there cum another trubble: The conductor woulddent let him ride in the car with white folks,—not even in the smokin-car. He made him go into the baggage-car. Abe wuz so scared

about leavin me for a minnit in that strange country that I tried 2 go into the baggage-car with him, but the conductor woulddnt let me. He said it wuz agin the rules for passengers to ride in the baggage-cars, but Abe could go in there, same as dogs, prize poultry, & household pets. I tried 2 joke with him, tellin him that in sum plaisis I wuz considered a household pet, but he said Ide have 2 git another mug on me before he could believe it.

One of Zeke Biltner's hogs ditched the train jest before we got home, & turned the baggage-car over. Sum crates ov eggs wuz smashed over Abraham Lincoln, & he wuz a sight to behold. He wuz awfully scared though & begged me 2 let him go the rest ov the way on foot. He said he wuz a thousand years older than when he left his ole massa, & I could understand what he meant.

I found your mother & the girls bright & chipper & jest tickled 2 death to see me safe back. They axed me so many questions about you & Shorty that my head buzzed like a bee-hive. It is hard 2 git away from them 2 tend 2 my Spring work, but Ive made an arrangement 2 giv em an hour mornin & evenin 2 answerin questions. I think this will keep me purty busy until the snow flise agin

Wheat is lookin suprisinly well, though I found sum bare plasis in the north field. I think we'll have a fair crop ov apples & peaches. Your colt is growin up the purtiest thing that ever went on four legs & jumped an eight-rail fence. My hogs wintered in good shape, & pork is risin. They have the measles over on the Crick, & school's broke up. Bill Scripp's out agin for Sheriff, & I spose Ile have 2 turn 2 agin & beat him. Singler, that he'll never know when he's got enuff.

* If anything, Abraham Lincoln's appetite has bin improved by Wabash air. I wuzzent goin 2 have the wim-

men folks wear theirselves out cookin for him. So I fixed up a place for him in the old log house, & took him over some sides ov meat, a few bushel ov pertaters, a jug ov sorghum molasses, & every time mother bakes she sends over some loaves ov bread. I jest turned him loose there. He seems 2 be very happy, & we hear him singin & yellin most all the time when he's by hisself. He's a good worker when I stand right over him, & he'll lift & dig as patient as an ox. But he haint no more sense about goin ahead by his self than a steer has, & the moment my back's turned he stops work. Ime afeared I've got a job on my hands makin a first-class farmer out ov him. But if that's my share ov the work that Providens has chalked out for me, there's nothin left for me but 2 go ahead & do it in fear & tremblin.

No more from your affeckshionate father

P. S. Give my best respects 2 Shorty

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"PRIDE GOETH BEFORE A FALL, AND A HAUGHTY SPIRIT
BEFORE DESTRUCTION."

Si and Shorty got the common feeling of men of some months' service, that they had fully mastered the art of war, and that there was little, if anything, left for them to learn. It did not take some men even so long as months to acquire this pleasant idea of themselves. Some entered the army feeling quite capable of giving advice to the oldest General in it, and they were not slow about offering their opinions.

Si and Shorty had had successes enough since their enlistment to develop a self-confidence which might be pardoned if it expanded into self-sufficiency and vanity.

The 200th Ind. had been sent out on a reconnoissance toward Shelbyville. No sign of rebels in force developed in any direction, and Si and Shorty got permission to go off on a little scout of their own.

"No use o' huntin' rebels with a brass band," said Si, who, since his association with Mr. Rosenbaum, had gotten some idea that stealth and cunning were efficient war powers. "We kin jest slip around out here somewhere, and if there is any rebels find 'em, and git more information than the whole regiment kin."

"I'm not so thirsty for information and rebels as I am for some fresh buttermilk," said Shorty. "Somehow, I've been hankering for buttermilk and cornpone for days. I haint had any for a coon's age, and it'd go mighty good as a change from camp rations. Buttermilk and rebels sometimes grow near together. You look for one, I'll look for the other. Mebbe we kin git both."

"I wouldn't mind havin' some buttermilk an' corn-pone myself," said Si. "But I'd like much better to drop on some rebels somewhere, and bring 'em into camp, and show that we kin git more information than the whole regiment kin."

"All right," assented Shorty; "ask the Captain to let us go. I'll be bound we'll find something worth goin' for, if it's no more'n a chicken for the Captain's supper. I'd like to take in one for him. He's been mighty good to me and you in several ways, and I'd like to show him that we appreciate it."

As the regiment had gone as far as ordered without discovering anything that in the least threatened the peace in that portion of Tennessee, it would start on its return, after the men had rested and had dinner. Si and Shorty, consequently, had no difficulty in securing the desired permission.

They cut off through a side-road, which gave promise of leading into a better-settled part of the country than that they had been traversing. A mile or so of walking brought them in sight of the substantial chimneys of a farm-house showing above the trees. A glimpse of a well-fenced field roused warm hopes in Shorty's heart.

"Now, I think we're comin' to a better thing than we've ever struck before," said he, as they stopped and surveyed the prospect. "We've got out o' the barren plateaus and into the rich farming country. That's likely a farm jest like they have up in Injianny, and it's way off where they haint knowed nothin' o' the war. No soljer's ever been anigh 'em, and they've jest got lots and plenty o' everything. They've got a great big barnyard full o' chickens and turkeys, pigs and geese and guineas. There, you kin hear the guineas hollerin' now. There's cows layin' in the shade chawin' the cud, while their calves

are cavortin' around in the sun, hogs rootin' in the woods-pasture, horses and sheep in the medder, and everything like it is at home. And down a little ways from the house there's a cool spring-house, with clear, cold water wellin' up and ripplin' out over the clean white sand, with crocks o' fresh milk setting in it with cream a half an inch thick, and big jars o' buttermilk from the last churnin', and piggins o' fresh butter, and mebbe a big crock full o' smemarkase. Si, do you like smemarkase?"

"Deed I do," answered Si, his mouth watering at the thought. "My goodness, you jest orter eat some o' mother's smemarkase. She jest lays over all the women in the country for smemarkase. Many's the time I've come in hot and sweatin' from the field, and got a thick slice o' bread clear acrost the loaf from one o' the girls, and went down to our spring-house and spread it with fresh butter, and then put a thick layer o' smemarkase on top o' that, and then got about a quart o' cool milk, that was half cream, from one o' the crocks, and then"—

"Shet up, Si," shouted Shorty, desperately. "Do you want me to bang you over the head with my musket? Do you 'spose I kin stand everything? But I believe there's jest sich a spring-house down there, and we'll find it plumb-full o' all them sort o' things. Le's mosey on."

"Do you think there's any rebels around here?" said Si, the caution which experience had taught him making a temporary reassertion of itself.

"Naw," said Shorty, contemptuously, "there ain't no rebel this side o' the Duck River, unless some straggler, who'd run if he saw us. If we ketch sight o' one we'll take him into camp, jest to gratify you. But I ain't lookin' for none. Buttermilk and cornpone's what I want."

The scene was certainly peaceful enough to iustify

Shorty's confidence. A calmer, quieter landscape could not have been found in the whole country. A negro was plowing in a distant field, with occasional sonorous yells to his team. He did not seem to notice the soldiers, nor did a gray-haired white man who was sitting on the fence superintending him. A couple of negresses were washing the family linen by a fire under a large kettle on the creek bank, at some distance from the house, and spreading the cleansed garments out on the grass to dry and bleach. Cattle and horses were feeding on the fresh Spring grass and sheep browsing on the bushes on the hillside. Hens cackled and roosters crowed; the guineas, ever on the lookout, announced their approach with shrill, crackling notes. Two or three dogs waked up and barked lazily at them as they walked up the path to where an elderly, spectacled woman sat on the porch knitting. She raised her eyes and threw her spectacles on top of her head, and looked curiously at them.

Whatever faint misgivings Si might have had vanished at the utter peacefulness of the scene. It was so like the old home that he had left that he could not imagine that war existed anywhere near. It seemed as if the camp at Murfreesboro' and the bloody field of Stone River must be a thousand miles away. The beds of roses and pinks which bordered the walk were the same as decorated the front yard at home. There were the same clumps of snowballs and lilacs at the corners of the house.

"Howdy, gentlemen?" said the woman, as they came up.

It seemed almost a wrong and insult to be carrying deadly arms in the presence of such a woman, and Si and Shorty let their guns slip down, as if they were rather ashamed of them.

"Good day, ma'am," said Shorty, taking off his hat politely and wiping his face. "We're lookin' around to

git some cornpone and buttermilk, and didn't know but what you might let us have some. We're willin' to pay for it."

"If you want suthin' to eat," said the woman promptly, "I kin gin it to ye. I never turn no hungry man away from my door. Wait a minnit, and I'll bring ye some."

She disappeared inside the house, and Si remarked to Shorty:

"Your head's level this time, as it generally is. We'll git something that's worth while comin' after."

The woman reappeared with a couple of good-size corn-dodgers in her hand.

"This appears to be all the bread that's left over from dinner," she said. "And the meat's all gone. But the wenches 'll be through their washin' purty soon, and then I'll have them cook ye some more, if ye'll wait."

"Thankee, ma'am," said Shorty; "we can't wait. This 'll be a plenty, if we kin only git some buttermilk to go with it. We don't want no meat. We git plenty o' that in camp."

"You kin have all the buttermilk ye want to drink," she answered, "if you'll go down to the spring-house thar and git it. It's fresh, and you'll find a gourd right beside o' the jar. I'd go with you, but it allers gives me the rheumatiz to go nigh the spring-house."

"Don't bother, ma'am, to go with us," said Shorty politely. "We are very much obliged to you, indeed, and we kin make out by ourselves. How much do we owe you?" And he pulled a greenback dollar from his pocket.

"Nothin', nothin', at all," said the woman hastily. "I don't sell vittels. Never thought o' sich a thing. Ye're welcome to all you kin eat any time."

"Well, take the money, and let us ketch a couple of them chickens there," said Shorty, laying down the bill on the banister rail.

After a little demur the woman finally agreed to this, and picked up the money. The boys selected two fat chickens, ran them down, wrung their necks, and, after repeating their thanks, took their bread and started for the spring-house. They found it the coolest and most inviting place in the world on a hot, tiresome day—just



UNDESIRABLE ACQUAINTANCES.

such a spot as Shorty had described. It was built of rough stones, and covered with a moss-grown roof. A copious spring poured out a flood of clear, cool water, which flowed over white pebbles and clean-looking sand until it formed a cross-bordered rivulet just beyond the house. In the water sat crocks of fresh milk, a large jar

of buttermilk, and buckets of butter. The looks, the cool, pure freshness of the place, were delightful contrasts from the tiresome smells and appearances of the camp kitchens. The boys reveled in the change. They forgot all about war's alarms, stood their rifles up against the side of the spring-house, washed their dust-grimed faces and hands in the pure water, dried them with their handkerchiefs, and prepared to enjoy their meal. How good the buttermilk tasted along with the cornpone. The fresh milk was also sampled, and some of the butter spread upon their bread.

Si even went to the point of declaring that it was almost as good as the things he used to eat at home, which was the highest praise he could possibly give to any food. Si never found anywhere victuals or cooking to equal that of his mother.

He was pointing out to Shorty, as they munched, the likenesses and unlikenesses of this spring-house to that on the Wabash, when they were startled by the stern command:

"Surrender, there, you infernal Yankees!"

They looked up with startled eyes to stare into a dozen muskets leveled straight at their heads from the willow thicket. Corndodgers and milk-gourds dropped into the water as they impulsively jumped to their feet.

"If yo'uns move we'uns 'll blow the lights outen yo'uns," shouted the leader of the rebels. "Hold up yer hands."

It was a moment of the most intense anguish that either of them had ever known. Their thoughts were lightninglike in rapidity. The rebel muzzles were not a rod away, their aim was true, and it would be madness to risk their fire, for it meant certain death.

The slightest move toward resistance was suicide.

Si gave a deep groan, and up went his hands at the same moment with Shorty's.

The rebels rushed out of the clump of willows behind which they had crept up on the boys, and surrounded them. Two snatched up their guns, and the others began pulling off their haversacks and other personal property as their own shares of the booty. In the midst of this, Si looked around, and saw the woman standing near calmly knitting.

"You ain't so afeared o' rheumatism all at once," he said bitterly.

"My rheumatiz has spells, young man, same ez other people's," she answered, pulling one of the needles out, and counting the stitches with it. "Sometimes it is better, and sometimes it is wuss. Jest now it is a great deal better, thankee. I only wisht I could toll the whole Yankee army to destruction ez easy ez you wuz. My, but ye walked right in, like the fly to the spider. I never had nothin' do my rheumatiz so much good."

And she cackled with delight.

"When you git through," she continued, addressing the leader of the rebels, "come up to the house, and I'll have some dinner cooked for ye. I know ye're powerful tired an' hongry. I s'pose nothin' need be cooked for them," and she pointed her knitting-needle contemptuously at Si and Shorty. "Ole Satan'll be purvidin' fur them. I'll take these along to cook fur ye."

She gathered up the dead chickens and stalked back to the house.

"Ef we're gwine t' shoot they'uns le's take they'uns over thar on the knoll, whar they'uns won't spile nothin'," said one evil-looking man, who had just ransacked Si's pockets and appropriated everything in them. "Hit'd be too bad t' kill they'uns here right in sight o' the house."

"Le'me see them letters, Bushrod," said the leader, snatching a package of letters and Annabel's picture

out of the other's hand. "Mebbe thar's some news in them that the Captain'd like to have."

Si gnashed his teeth as he saw the cherished missives rudely torn open and scanned, and especially when the ambrotype case was opened and Annabel's features made the subject of coarse comment. The imminent prospect of being murdered had a much lighter pang.

While the letters and ambrotype were being looked over the process of robbery was going on. One had snatched Si's cap, another had pulled off his blouse, and there was a struggle as to who should have possession of his new Government shoes, which were regarded as a great prize. Si had resisted this spoliation, but was caught from behind and held, despite his kicks and struggles, while the shoes were pulled off. Shorty was treated in the same way.

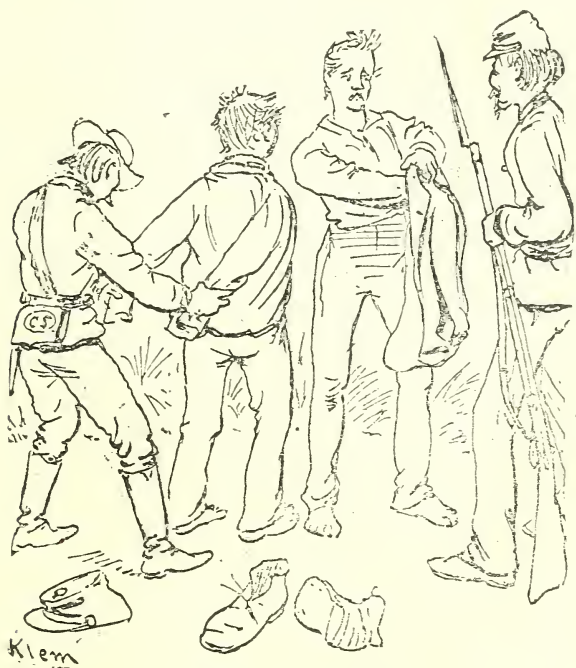
In a few minutes both, exhausted by their vigorous resistance, were seated on the ground, with nothing left on them but their pantaloons, while their captors were quarreling over the division of their personal effects, and as to what disposition was to be made of them. In the course of the discussion the boys learned that they had been captured by a squad of young men from the immediate neighborhood, who had been allowed to go home on furlough, had been gathered together when the regiment appeared, and had been watching every movement from safe coverts. They had seen Si and Shorty leave, and had carefully dogged their steps until such moment as they could pounce on them.

"Smart as we thought we wuz," said Si bitterly, "we played right into their hands. They tracked us down jest as if we'd bin a couple o' rabbits, and ketched us jest when they wanted us."

He gave a groan which Shorty echoed.

Bushrod and two others were for killing the two boys then and there and ending the matter.

"They orter be killed, Ike, right here," said Bushrod to the leader. "They deserve it, and we'uns haint got no time to fool. We'uns can't take they'uns back with we'uns, ef we wanted to, and I for one don't want to. I'd ez soon have a rattlesnake around me."



THE SPOILS OF WAR.

But Ike, the leader, was farther-seeing. He represented to the others the vengeance the Yankees would take on the people of the neighborhood if they murdered the soldiers.

This developed another party, who favored taking the prisoners to some distance and killing them there, so as to avoid the contingency that Ike had set forth. Then

there were propositions to deliver them over to the guerilla leaders, to be disposed of as they pleased.

Finally, it occurred to Ike that they were talking entirely too freely before the prisoners, unless they intended to kill them outright, for they were giving information in regard to the position and operations of rebel bands that might prove dangerous. He drew his squad off a little distance to continue the discussion. At first they kept their eyes on the prisoners and their guns ready to fire, but as they talked they lost their watchful attitude in the eagerness of making their points.

Si looked at Shorty, and caught an answering gleam. Like a flash both were on their feet and started on a mad rush for the fence. Bushrod saw them start, and fired. His bullet cut off a lock of Si's auburn hair. Others fired as fast as they could bring their guns up, and the bullets sang viciously around, but none touched the fugitives. Their bare feet were torn by the briars as they ran, but they thought not of these. They plunged into the blackberry briars along the fence, climbed it, and gained the road some distance ahead of their pursuers, who were not impelled by the fear of immediate death to spur them on. Up the road went Si and Shorty with all the speed that will-power could infuse into their legs. Some of the rebels stopped to reload; the others ran after. A score of noisy dogs suddenly waked up and joined in the pursuit. The old white man mounted his horse and came galloping toward the house.

On the boys ran, gaining, if anything, upon the foremost of the rebels. The dogs came nearer, but before they could do any harm the boys halted for an instant and poured such a volley of stones into them that they ran back lamed and yelping. The fleetest-footed of the rebels, who was the sanguinary Bushrod, also came within a stone's throw, and received a well-aimed bowlder

from Si's muscular hand full in his face. This cheered the boys so that they ran ahead with increased speed and finally gained the top of the hill from which they had first seen the farm-house.

They looked back and saw their enemies still after them. Ike had taken the old man's horse and was com-



AN UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION.

ing on a gallop. They knew he had a revolver, and shivered at the thought. But both stooped and selected the best stones to throw, to attack him with as soon as he came within range. They halted a minute to get their breath and nerve for a good effort. Ike had reached a steep, difficult part of the road, where his horse had to come down to a walk and pick his way.

"Now, Si," said Shorty, "throw for your life, if you never

did before. I'm goin' to git him. You take his horse's head. Aim for that white blaze in his forehead."

Si concentrated his energy into one supreme effort. He could always beat the rest of the boys in throwing stones, and now his practice was to save him. He flung the smooth, round pebble with terrific force, and it went true to its mark. The horse reared with his rider just at the instant that a bowlder from Shorty's hand landed on Ike's breast. The rebel fell to the ground, and the boys ran on.

At the top of the next hill they saw the regiment marching leisurely along at the foot of the hill. It was so unexpected a deliverance that it startled them. It seemed so long since they had left the regiment that it might have been clear back to Nashville. They yelled with all their remaining strength, and tore down the hill. Co. Q saw them at once, and at the command of the Captain came forward at the double-quick. The rebels had in the meanwhile gained the top of the hill. A few shots were fired at them as they turned from the chase.

The Colonel rode back and questioned the boys. Then he turned to the Captain of Co. Q and said:

"Captain, take your company over to that house. If you find anything that you think we need in camp, bring it back with you. Put these boys in the ambulance."

The exhausted Si and Shorty were helped into the ambulance, the Surgeon gave them a reviving drink of whisky and quinine, and as they stretched themselves out on the cushioned seats Si remarked:

"Shorty, we ain't ez purty ez we used to be, but we know a durned sight more."

"I doubt it," said Shorty surlily. "I think me and you'll be fools as long as we live. We won't be fools the same way agin, you kin bet your life, but we'll find some other way."

CHAPTER XXIX

SI AND SHORTY HAVE A PERIOD OF SELF-DISGUST FOLLOWED
BY RECOVERY.

It took many days for the boys' lacerated feet to recover sufficiently to permit their going about and returning to duty. They spent the period of enforced idleness in chewing the cud of bitter reflection. The thorns had cut far more painfully into their pride than into their feet. The time was mostly passed in moody silence, very foreign to the customary liveliness of the Hoosier's Rest. They only spoke to one another on the most necessary subjects, and then very briefly. In their sour shame to the whole thing they even became wroth with each other. Shorty sneered at the way Si cleaned up the house, and Si condemned Shorty's cooking. Thenceforth Shorty slept on the floor, while Si occupied the bed, and they cooked their meals separately. The newness of the clothes they drew from the Quartermaster angered them, and they tried to make them look as dirty and shabby as the old.

Once they were on the point of actually coming to blows.

Si had thoughtlessly flung some dishwater into the company street. It was a misdemeanor that in ordinary times would have been impossible to him. Now almost anything was.

Shorty instantly growled:

"You slouch, you ought to go to the guardhouse for that."

Si retorted hotly:

"Slouch yourself! Look where you threw them cof-

fee-grounds this morning," and he pointed to the tell-tale evidence beside the house.

"Well, that ain't near so bad," said Shorty crustily. "That at least pretended to be tidy."

"Humph," said Si, with supreme disdainfulness. "It's the difference betwixt sneakin' an' straight-out. I throwed mine right out in the street. You tried to hide yours, and made it all the nastier. But whatever you do's all right. Whatever I do's all wrong. You're a pill."



SHORTY AND SI ARE AT OUTS.

"Look here, Mister Klegg," said Shorty, stepping forward with doubled fist, "I'll have you understand that I've stood all the slack and impudence from you that I'm a-goin to."

"Shorty, if you double your fist up at me," roared the irate Si, "I'll knock your head off in a holy minute."

The boys of Co. Q were thunderstruck. It seemed as if their world was toppling when two such partners should disagree. They gathered around in voiceless sorrow and wonderment and watched developments.

Shorty seemed in the act of springing forward, when the sharp roll of the drum at Headquarters beating the "assembly" arrested all attention. Everyone looked eagerly toward the Colonel's tent, and saw him come out buckling on his sword, while his Orderly sped away for his horse. Apparently, all the officers had been in consultation with him, for they were hurrying away to their several companies.

"Fall in, Co. Q," shouted the Orderly-Sergeant. "Fall in promptly."

Everybody made a rush for his gun and equipments.

"Hurry up, Orderly," said Capt. McGillicuddy, coming up with sword and belt in hand. "Let the boys take what rations they can lay their hands on, but not stop to cook any. We've got to go on the jump."

All was rush and hurry. Si and Shorty bolted for their house, forgetful of their mangled feet. Si got in first, took his gun and cartridge-box down, and buckled on his belt. He looked around for his rations while Shorty was putting on his things. His bread and meat and Shorty's were separate, and there was no trouble about them. But the coffee and sugar had not been divided, and were in common receptacles. He opened the coffee-can and looked in. There did not seem to be more than one ration there. He hesitated a brief instant what to do. It would serve Shorty just right to take all the coffee. He liked his coffee even better than Shorty did, and was very strenuous about having it. If he did ~~not~~ take it Shorty might think that he was either anxi-

ous to make up or afraid, and he wanted to demonstrate that he was neither. Then there was a twinge that it would be mean to take the coffee, and leave his partner, senseless and provoking as he seemed, without any. He set the can down, and turning as if to look for something to empty it in, pretended to hear something outside the house to make him forget it, and hurried out.

Presently Shorty came out, and ostentatiously fell into line at a distance from Si. It was the first time they had not stood shoulder to shoulder.

The Orderly-Sergeant looked down the line, and called out:

"Here, Corp'l Klegg, you're not fit to go. Neither are you, Shorty. Step out, both of you."

"Yes, I'm all right," said Shorty. "Feet's got well. I kin outwalk a Wea Injun."

"Must've bin using some Lightning Elixir Liniment," said the Orderly-Sergeant incredulously. "I saw you both limping around like string-halted horses not 15 minutes ago. Step out, I tell you."

"Captain, le' me go along," pleaded Si. "You never knowed me to fall out, did you?"

"Captain, I never felt activer in my life," asserted Shorty; "and you know I always kept up. I never played sore-foot any day."

"I don't believe either of you're fit to go," said Capt. McGillicuddy, "but I won't deny you. You may start anyway. By the time we get to the pickets you can fall out if you find you can't keep up."

"The rebel cavalry's jumped a herd of beef cattle out at pasture, run off the guard, and are trying to get away with them," the Orderly-Sergeant hurriedly explained, as he lined up Co. Q. "We're to make a short cut across the country and try to cut them off. Sir, the company's formed."

"Attention, Co. Q!" shouted Capt. McGillicuddy. "Right face!—Forward, file left!—March!"

The company went off at a terrific pace to get its place with the regiment, which had already started without it.

Though every step was a pang, Si and Shorty kept up unflinchingly. Each was anxious to outdo the other, and to bear off bravely before the company. The Captain and Orderly-Sergeant took an occasional look at them until they passed the picket-line, when other more pressing matters engaged the officers' attention.

The stampeded guards, mounted on mules or condemned horses, or running on foot, came tearing back, each with a prodigious tale of the numbers and ferocity of the rebels.

The regiment was pushed forward with all the speed there was in it, going down-hill and over the level stretch at a double-quick. Si felt his feet bleeding, and it seemed at times that he could not go another step, but then he would look back down the line and catch a glimpse of Shorty keeping abreast of his set of fours, and he would spur himself to renewed effort. Shorty would long to throw himself in a fence-corner and rest for a week, until, as they went over some rise, he would catch sight of Si's sandy hair, well in the lead, when he would drink in fresh determination to keep up, if he died in the attempt.

Presently they arrived at the top of a hill from which they could see the rebel cavalry rounding up and driving off the cattle, while a portion of the enemy's horsemen were engaged in a fight with a small squad of infantry ensconced behind a high rail fence.

Si and Shorty absolutely forgot their lameness as Co. Q separated from the column and rushed to the assist-

ance of the squad, while the rest of the regiment turned off to the right to cut off the herd. But they were lame all the same, and tripped and fell over a low fence which the rest of the company easily leaped. They gathered themselves up, sat on the ground for an instant and glared at one another.

"Blamed old tangle-foot," said Shorty derisively.

"You've got hoofs like a foundered hoss," retorted Si.

After this interchange of compliments, they staggered painfully to their feet and picked up their guns, which had flown some distance from their hands as they fell.

By this time Co. Q was a quarter of a mile away, and already beginning to fire on the rebels, who showed signs of relinquishing the attack.

"Gol darn the luck!" said Si with Wabash emphasis, beginning to limp forward.

"Wish the whole outfit was a mile deep in burnin' brimstone," wrathfully observed Shorty.

A couple of lucky shots had emptied two of the rebel saddles. The frightened horses turned away from the fighting line, and galloped down the road to the right of the boys. The leading one suddenly halted in a fence-corner about 30 yards away from Si, threw up his head and began surveying the scene, as if undecided what to do next. The other, seeing his mate stop, began circling around.

Hope leaped up in Si's breast. He began creeping toward the first horse, under the covert of the sumach. Shorty saw his design and the advantage it would give Si, and standing still began swearing worse than ever.

Si crept up as cautiously as he had used to in the old days when he was rabbit-hunting. The horse thrust his head over the fence, and began nibbling at a clump of tall rye growing there. Si thrust his hand out and caught his bridle. The horse made one frightened plunge, but

the hand on his bridle held with the grip of iron, and he settled down to mute obedience.

Si set his gun down in the fence-corner and climbed into the saddle.

Shorty made the Spring air yellow with profanity until he saw Si ride away from his gun toward the other horse. When the latter saw his mate, with a rider, coming toward him he gave a whinney and dashed forward. In an instant Si had hold of his bridle and was turning back. His face was bright with triumph. Shorty stopped in the middle of a soul-curdling oath and yelled delightedly:

"Bully for old Wabash! You're my pardner, after all, Si."

He hastened forward to the fence, grabbed up Si's gun and handed it to him, and then climbed into the other saddle.

The rebels were now falling back rapidly before Co. Q's fire. A small party detached itself and started down a side road.

Si and Shorty gave a yell, and galloped toward them, in full sight of Co. Q, who raised a cheer. The rebels spurred their horses, but Si and Shorty gained on them.

"Come on, Shorty," Si yelled. "I don't believe they've got a shot left. They haint fired once since they started."

He was right. Their cartridge-boxes had been emptied.

At the bottom of the hill a creek crossing the road made a deep, wide quagmire. The rebels were in too much hurry to pick out whatever road there might have been through it. Their leaders plunged in, their horses sank nearly to the knees, and the whole party bunched up.

"Surrender, you rebel galoots," yelled Si, reining up at a little distance, and bringing his gun to bear.

"Surrender, you offscourings of secession," added Shorty.

The rebels looked back, held up their hands, and said imploringly:

"Don't shoot, Mister. We'uns give up. We'uns air taylored."



SI AND SHORTY AS MOUNTED INFANTRY.

"Come back up here, one by one," commanded Si, "and go to our rear. Hold on to your guns. Don't throw 'em away. We ain't afraid of 'em."

One by one the rebels extricated their horses from the mire with more or less difficulty and filed back. Si kept

his gun on those in the quagmire, while Shorty attended to the others as they came back. Co. Q was coming to his assistance as fast as the boys could march.

What was the delight of the boys to recognize in their captives the squad which had captured them. The sanguinary Bushrod was the first to come back, and Si had to restrain a violent impulse to knock him off his horse with his gun-barrel. But he decided to settle with him when through with the ~~p~~resent business.

By the time the rebels were all up, Co. Q had arrived on the scene. As the prisoners were being disarmed and put under guard, Si called out to Capt. McGillicuddy:

"Captain, one o' these men is my partickler meat. I want to 'tend to him."

"All right, Corporal," responded the Captain. Attend to him, but don't be too rough on him. Remember that he is an unarmed prisoner."

Si and Shorty got down off their horses, and approached Bushrod, who turned white as death, trembled violently, and began to beg.

"Gentlemen, don't kill me," he whined. "I'm a poor man, an' have a fambly to support. I didn't mean nothin' by what I said. I sw'ar' t' Lord A'mighty I didn't."

"Jest wanted to hear yourself talk—jest practicin' your voice," said Shorty sarcastically, as he took the man by the shoulder and pulled him off into the brush by the roadside. "Jest wanted to skeer us, and see how fast we could run. Pleasant little pastime, eh?"

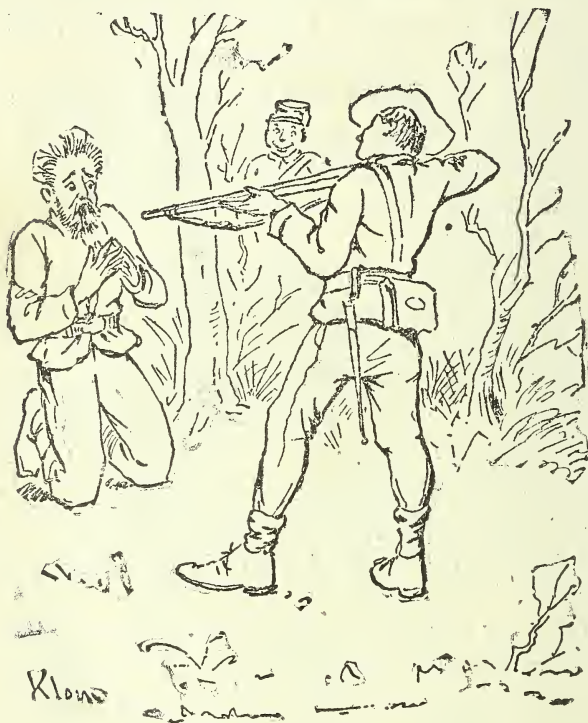
"And them things you said about a young lady up in Injianny," said Si, clutching him by the throat. "I want to wring your neck jest like a chicken's. What'd you do with her picture and letters?"

Si thrust his hand unceremoniously into Bushrod's pocket and found the ambrotype of Annabel. A brief

glance showed him that it was all right, and he gave a sigh of satisfaction, which showed some amelioration of temper toward the captive.

"What'd you do with them letters?" Si demanded fiercely.

"Ike has 'em," said Bushrod.



BUSHROD PRAYS FOR HIS LIFE.

"You've got my shoes on, you brindle whelp," said Shorty, giving him a cuff in bitter remembrance of his own smarting feet.

"If we're goin' to shoot him let's do it right off," said Si, looking at the cap on his gun. "The company's gittin' ready to start back."

"All right," said Shorty, with cheerful alacrity. "Johnny, your ticket for a brimstone supper's made out. How'd you rather be shot—standin' or kneelin'?"

"O, gentlemen, don't kill me. Ye hadn't orter. Why do ye pick me out to kill? I wuzzent no wuss'n the others. I wuzzent raylly half ez bad. I didn't raylly mean t' harm ye. I only talked. I had t' talk that-a-way, for I alluz was a Union man, and had t' make a show for the others. I don't want t' be shot at all."

"You aint answerin' my question," said Shorty coolly and inexorably. "I asked you how you preferred to be shot. These other things you mention hain't nothin' to do with my question."

He leveled his gun at the unhappy man and took a deliberate sight.

"O, for the Lord A'mighty's sake, don't shoot me down like a dog," screamed Bushrod. "Le'me have a chance to pray, an' make my peace with my Maker."

"All right," conceded Shorty, "go and kneel down there by that cottonwood, and do the fastest prayin' you ever did in all your born days, for you have need of it. We'll shoot when I count three. You'd better make a clean breast of all your sins and transgressions before you go. You'll git a cooler place in the camp down below."

Unseen, the rest of Co. Q were peeping through the bushes and enjoying the scene.

Bushrod knelt down with his face toward the cottonwood, and began an agonized prayer, mingled with confessions of crimes and malefactions, some flagrant, some which brought a grin of amusement to the faces of Co. Q.

"One!" called out Shorty in stentorian tones.

"O, for the love o' God, Mister, don't shoot me," yelled Bushrod, whirling around, with uplifted arms. "I'm too wicked t' die, an' I've got a fambly dependin' on me."

"Turn around there, and finish your prayin'," sternly

commanded Shorty, with his and Si's faces down to the stocks of their muskets, in the act of taking deliberate aim.

Bushrod flopped around, threw increased vehemence into his prayer, and resumed his recital of his misdeeds.

"Two!" counted Shorty.

Again Bushrod whirled around with uplifted hands and begged for mercy.

"Nary mercy," said Shorty. "You wouldn't give it to us, and you haint given it to many others, according to your own account. Your light's flickerin', and we'll blow it out at the next count. Turn around, there."

Bushrod made the woods ring this time with his fervent, tearful appeals to the Throne of Grace. He was so wrought up by his impending death that he did not hear Co. Q quietly move away, at a sign from the Captain with Si and Shorty mounting their horses and riding off noiselessly over the sod.

For long minutes Bushrod continued his impassioned, appeals at the top of his voice, expecting every instant to have the Yankee bullets crash through his brain. At length he had to stop from lack of breath. Everything was very quiet—deathly so, it seemed to him. He stole a furtive glance around. No Yankees could be seen out of the tail of his eye on either side. Then he looked squarely around. None was visible anywhere. He jumped up, began cursing savagely, ran into the road, and started for home. He had gone but a few steps when he came squarely in front of the musket of the Orderly-Sergeant of Co. Q, who had placed himself in concealment to see the end of the play and bring him along.

"Halt, there," commanded the Orderly-Sergeant; "face the other way and trot. We must catch up with the company."

Si and Shorty felt that they had redeemed themselves, and returned to camp in such good humor with each other, and everybody else, that they forgot that their feet were almost as bad as ever.

They went into the house and began cooking their supper together again. Shorty picked up the coffee-can and said:

"Si Klegg, you're a gentleman all through, if you was born on the Wabash. A genuine gentleman is knowed by his never bein' no hog under no circumstances. I watched you when you looked into this coffee-can, and mad as I was at you, I said you was a thorobred when you left it all to me."

CHAPTER XXX.

SHORTY BECOMES ENTANGLED IN A HIGHLY IMPORTANT CORRESPONDENCE.

A light spring wagon, inscribed "United States Sanitary Commission," drove through the camp of the 200th Ind., under the charge of a dignified man, with a clerical cast of countenance, who walked alongside, looking at the soldiers and into the tents, and stopping from time to time to hand a can of condensed milk to this one, a jar of jam to another, and bunches of tracts to whomsoever would take them.

Shorty was sitting in front of the house bathing his aching feet. The man stopped before him, and looked compassionately at his swollen pedals.

"Your feet are in a very bad way, my man," he said sadly.

"Yes, durn 'em," said Shorty impatiently. "I don't seem to git 'em well nohow. Must've got 'em pizened when I was runnin' through the briars."

"Probably some ivy or poison-oak, or nightshade among the briars. Poison-oak is very bad, and nightshade is deadly. I knew a man once that had to have his hand amputated on account of getting poisoned by something that scratched him—nightshade, ivy, or poison-oak. I'm afraid your feet are beginning to mortify."

"Well, you are a Job's comforter," thought Shorty. "You'd be nice to send for when a man's sick. You'd scare him to death, even if there was no danger o' his dyin'."

"My friend," said the man, turning to his wagon, "I've here a nice pair of home-made socks, which I will give

you, and which will come in nicely if you save your eggs. If you don't, give them to some needy man. Here are also some valuable tracts, full of religious consolation and advice, which it will do your soul good to peruse and study."

Shorty took the gift thankfully, and turned over the tracts with curiosity.

"On the Sin of Idolatry," he read the title of the first.

"Now, why'd he give me that? What graven image have I bin worshipin'? What gods of wood and stone have I bin bowin' down before in my blindness? There've bin times when I thought a good deal more of a Commissary tent than I did of a church, but I got cured of that as soon as I got a square meal. I don't see where I have bin guilty of idolatry."

"On the Folly of Self-Pride," he read from the next one. "Humph, there may be something in that that I oughter read. I am very liable to git stuck on myself, and think how purty I am, and how graceful, and how sweetly I talk, and what fine cloze I wear. Especially the cloze. I'll put that tract in my pocket an' read it after awhile."

"On the Evils of Gluttony," he next read. "Well, that's a timely tract, for a fact. I'm in the habit o' goin' around stuffin' myself, as this says, with delicate viands, and drinkin' fine wines—'makin' my belly a god.' The man what wrote this must've bin intimately acquainted with the sumptuous menoo which Uncle Sam sets before his nephews. He must've knowed ali about the delicate, apetizin' flavor of a slab o' fat pork four inches thick, taken off the side of the hog that's uppermost when he's laying on his back. And how I gormandize on hardtack baked in the first place for the Revolutioners, and kept over ever since. That feller knows jest what he's writin' about. I'd like to exchange photographs with him."

"Thou Shalt Not Swear." Shorty read a few words, got red in the face, whistled softly, crumpled the tract up, and threw it away.

"On the Sin of Dancing." Shorty yelled with laughter. "Me dance with these hoofs! And he thinks likely mortification'll set in, and I'll lose 'em altogether. Well, he oughter be harnessed up with Thompson's colt. Which'd come out ahead in the race for the fool medal? But these seem to be nice socks. Fine yarn, well-knit, and by stretching a little I think I kin get 'em on. I declare, they're beauties. I'll jest make Si sick with envy when I show 'em to him. I do believe they lay over anything his mother ever sent him. Hello, what's this?"

He extracted from one of them a note in a small, white envelope, on one end of which was a blue Zouave, with red face, hands, cap and gaiters, brandishing a red sword in defense of a Star Spangled Banner which he held in his left hand.

"Must belong to the Army o' the Potomac," mused Shorty, studying the picture. "They wear all sorts o' outlandish uniforms there. That red-headed woodpecker'd be shot before he'd git in a mile o' the rebels out here. All that hollyhock business'd jest be meat for their sharpshooters. And what's he doin' with that 'ere sword? I wouldn't give that Springfield rifle o' mine for all the swords that were ever hammered out. When I reach for a feller 600 or even 800 yards away I kin fetch him every time. He's my meat unless he jumps behind a tree. But as for swords, I never could see no sense in 'em; except for officers to put on lugs with. I wouldn't pack one a mile for a wagonload of 'em."

He looked at the address on the envelope. Straight lines had been scratched across with a pin. On these was written, in a cramped, mincing hand:

"To the brave soljer who Gits these Socks."

"Humph," mused Shorty, "that's probably for me. I've got the socks, and I'm a soldier. As to whether I'm brave or not's a matter of opinion. Sometimes I think I am; agin, when there's a dozen rebel guns pinte at my head, not 10 feet away, I think I'm not. But we'll play that I'm brave enough to have this intended for me, and I'll open it."

On the sheet of paper inside was another valorous red-and-blue Zouave defending the flag with drawn sword. On it was written:

"Bad Ax, Wisconsin,

"Janooary the 14th, 1863.

"Braiv Soljer: I doant know who you air, or whair you may bee; I only know that you air serving your country, and that is enuf to intitle to the gratitude and affection of every man and woman who has the breath of patriotism in their bodies.

"I am anxious to do something all the time, very little thought it may be, to help in some way the men who air fiting the awful battles for me, and for every man and woman in the country.

"I send these socks now as my latest contribution. They aint much, but I've put my best work on them, and I hoap they will be useful and comiortable to some good, braiv man.

"How good you may be I doant know, but you air sert-ingly a much better man than you would be if you was not fiting for the Union. I hoap you air a regler, consistent Christian. Ide prefer you to be a Methodist Episcopal, but any church is much better than none.

"He be glad to heer that you have received these things all rite.

"Sincerely your friend and well-wisher,

"Jerusha Ellen Briggs."

Although Shorty was little inclined to any form of reading, and disliked handwriting about as much as he did work on the fortifications, he read the letter over several times, until he had every word in it and every feature of the labored, cramped penmanship thoroughly imprinted on his mind. Then he held it off at arm's length for some time, and studied it with growing admiration. It seemed to him the most wonderful epistle that ever emanated from any human hand. A faint scent of roses came from it to help the fascination.

"I'll jest bet my head agin a big red apple," he soliloquized, "the woman that writ that's the purtiest girl in the State o' Wisconsin. I'll bet there's nothin' in Injanny to hold a candle to her, purty as Si thinks his Annabel is. And smart—my! Jest look at that letter. That tells it. Every word spelled correckly, and the grammar away up in G. Annabel's a mighty nice girl, and purty, too, but I've noticed she makes mistakes in spelling, and her grammar's the Wabash kind—home-made."

He drew down his eyebrows, pursed his lips, and assumed a severely critical look for a reperusal of the letter and judgment upon it according to the highest literary standards.

"No, sir," he said, with an air of satisfaction, "not a blamed mistake in it, from beginnin' to end. Every word spelled jest right, the grammar straight as the Ten Commandments, every t crossed and i dotted accordin' to regulashuns and the Constitushun of the United States. She must be a school-teacher, and yit a school-teacher couldn't knit sich socks as them. She's a lady, every inch of her. Religious, too. Belongs to the Methodist Church. Si's father's a Baptist, and so's my folks, but I always did think a heap o' the Methodists. I think

they have a little nicer girls than the Baptists. I think I'd like to marry a Methodist wife."

Then he blushed vividly, all to himself, to think how fast his thoughts had traveled. He returned to the letter, to cover his confusion.

"Bad Ax, Wis. What a queer name for a place. Never heard of it before. Wonder where in time it is? I'd like awfully to know. There's the 1st and 21st Wis. in Rousseau's Division, and the 10th Wis. Battery in Palmer's Division. I might go over there and ask some o' them. Mebbe some of 'em are right from there. I'll bet it's a mighty nice place."

He turned to the signature with increased interest.

"Jerusha Ellen Briggs. Why, the name itself is reg'lar poetry. Jerusha is awful purty. Your Mollies and Sallies and Emmies can't hold a candle to it. And Annabel—pshaw! Ellen—why that's my mother's name. Briggs? I knowed some Briggses once—way-up, awfully nice people. Seems to me they wuz Presbyterians, though, and I always thought that Presbyterians wuz stuck-up, but they wuzzent stuck-up a mite. I wonder if Miss Jerusha Ellen Briggs—she must be a Miss—haint some beau? But she can't have. If he wuzzent in the army she wouldn't have him; and if he was in the army she'd be sending the socks to him, instead of to whom it may concern."

This brilliant bit of logic disposed of a sudden fear which had been clutching at his heart. It tickled him so much that he jumped up, slapped his breast, and grinned delightedly and triumphantly at the whole landscape.

"What's pleasin' you so mightly, Shorty?" asked Si, who had just come up. "Got a new system for beatin' chuck-a-luck, or bin promoted?"

"No, nothin'! Nothin's happened," said Shorty curtly,

as he hastily shoved the letter into his blouse pocket. "Will you watch them beans bilin' while I go down to the spring and git some water?"

He picked up the camp-kettle and started. He wanted to be utterly alone, even from Si, with his new-born thoughts. He did not go directly to the spring, but took another way to a clump of pawpaw bushes, which would hide him from the observation of everyone. There he sat down, pulled out the letter again, and read it over carefully, word by word.

"Wants me to write whether I got the socks," he mused. "You jest bet I will. I've a great mind to ask for a furlough to go up to Wisconsin, and find out Bad Ax. I wonder how fur it is. I'll go over to the Sutler's and git some paper and envelopes, and write to her this very afternoon."

He carried his camp-kettle back to the house, set it down, and making some excuse, set off for the Sutler's shop.

"Le'me see your best paper and envelopes," he said to the pirate who had license to fleece the volunteers.

"Awfully common trash," said Shorty, looking over the assortment disdainfully, for he wanted something superlatively fine for his letter. "Why don't you git something fit for a gentleman to write to a lady on? Something with gold edges on the paper and envelopes, and perfumed? I never write to a lady except on gilt-edged paper, smellin' o' bergamot, and musk, and citronella, and them things. I don't think it's good taste."

"Well, think what you please," said the Sutler. "That's all the kind I have, and that's all the kind you'll git. Take it or leave it."

Shorty finally selected a quire of heavy letter paper and a bunch of envelopes, both emblazoned with patriotic and warlike designs in brilliant red and blue.

"Better take enough," he said to himself. "I've been handlin' a pick and shovel and gun so much that I'm afeared my hand isn't as light as it used to be, and I'll have to spile several sheets before I git it jest right."

On his way back he decided to go by the camp of one of the Wisconsin regiments and learn what he could of Bad Ax and its people.

"Is there a town in your State called Bad Ax?" he asked of the first man he met with "Wis." on his cap.

"Cert'," was the answer. "And another one called Milwaukee, one called Madison, and another called Green Bay. Are you studying primary geography, or just getting up a postoffice directory?"

"Don't be funny, Skeeziacs," said Shorty severely. "Know anything about it? Mighty nice place, ain't it?"

"Know anything about it? I should say so. My folks live in Bad Ax County. It's the toughest, orneriest little hole in the State. Run by lead-miners. More whisky-shanties than dwellings. It's tough, I tell you."

"I believe you're an infernal liar," said Shorty, turning away in wrath.

Not being fit for duty, he could devote all his time to the composition of the letter. He was so wrought up over it that he could not eat much dinner, which alarmed Si.

"What's the matter with your appetite, Shorty?" he asked. "Haint bin eatin' nothin' that disagreed with you, have you?"

"Naw," answered Shorty impatiently; "nothin' wuss'n army rations. They always disagree with me when I'm layin' around doin' nothin'. Why, in the name of goodness, don't the army move? I've got sick o' the sight o' every cedar and rocky knob in Middle Tennessee. We ought to go down and take a look at things around Tullahoma, where Mr. Bragg is."

It was Si's turn to clean up after dinner, and, making an excuse of going over into another camp to see a man who had arrived there, Shorty, with his paper and envelopes concealed under his blouse, and Si's pen and wooden ink-stand furtively conveyed to his pocket, picked up the checkerboard when Si's back was turned, and made his way to the pawpaw thicket, where he could be unseen and unmolested in the greatest literary undertaking of his life.

He took a comfortable seat on a rock, spread the paper on the checkerboard, and then began vigorously chewing the end of the penholder to stimulate his thoughts.

It had been easy to form the determination to write; the desire to do so was irresistible, but never before had he been confronted with a task which seemed so overwhelming. Compared with it, struggling with a mule-train all day through the mud and rain, working with pick and shovel on the fortifications, charging an enemy's solid line-of-battle, appeared light and easy performances. He would have gone at either, on the instant, at the word of command, or without waiting for it, with entire confidence in his ability to master the situation. But to write a half-dozen lines to a strange girl, whom he had already enthroned as a lovely divinity, had more terrors than all of Bragg's army could induce.

But when Shorty set that somewhat thick head of his upon the doing of a thing, the thing was tolerably certain to be done in some shape or another.

"I believe, if I knowed where Bad Ax was, I'd git a furlough, and walk clean there, rather than write a line," he said, as he wiped from his brow the sweat forced out by the labor of his mind. "I always did hate writin'. I'd rather maul rails out of a twisted elm log any day, than fill up a copy book. But it's got to be done, and

the sooner I do it the sooner the agony'll be over. Here goes."

He began laboriously forming each letter with his lips, and still more laboriously with his stiff fingers, adding one to another, until he had traced out:

"Headquarters Co. Q, 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry. Murfreesboro, Aprile the 16th eighteen hundred & sixty-three."

The sweat stood out in beads upon his forehead after this effort, but it was as nothing compared to the strain of deciding how he should address his correspondent. He wanted to use some term of fervent admiration, but fear deterred him. He debated the question with himself until his head fairly ached when he settled upon the inoffensive phrase:

"Respected Lady."

The effort was so exhausting that he had to go down to the spring, take a deep drink of cold water, and bathe his forehead. But his determination was unabated, and before the sun went down he had produced the following:

"i taik mi pen in hand 2 inform U that ive reseaved the sox U so kindly cent, & i thank U 1,000 times 4 them. They are boss sox & no mistake. They are the bossiest sox that ever wuz nit. The man is a lire who sez they aint. He dassent tel Me so. U are a boss nitter. Even Misses Linkun can't hold a candle 2 U.

"The sox fit me 2 a t, but that iz becaws they are nit so wel, & stretch."

"I wish I knowed some more real strong words to praise her knitting," said Shorty, reading over the laboriously-written lines. "But after I have said they're boss what more is there to say? I spose I ought to say something about her health next. That's polite." And he wrote:

"ime in fair helth, except my feet are locoed, & i weigh 176 pounds, & hope U are injoyin^g the saim blessing."

"I expect I ought to praise her socks a little more," said he, and wrote:

"The sox are jest boss. They outrank anything in the Army of the Cumberland."

After this effort he was compelled to take a long rest. Then he communed with himself:

"When a man's writin' to a lady, and especially an educated lady, he should always throw in a little poetry. It touches her."

There was another period of intense thought, and then he wrote:

"Dan Elliot is my name,
& single is my station,
Injianny is mi dwelling place,
& Christ is mi salvation."

"Now," he said triumphantly, "that's neat and effective. It tells her a whole lot about me, and makes her think I know Shakspeare by heart. Wonder if I can't think o' some more? Hum—hum, Yes, here goes:

"The rose is red, the vilet's blue;
ime 4 the Union, so are U."

Shorty was so tickled over this happy conceit that he fairly hugged himself, and had to read it over several times to admire its beauty. But it left him too exhausted for any further mental labor than to close up with:

"No moar at present, from yours til death.

"Dan Elliott,

"Co. Q, 200th Injianny Volunteer Infantry."

He folded up the missive, put it into an envelope, carefully directed to Miss Jerusha Ellen Briggs, Bad Ax, Wis., and after depositing it in the box at the Chaplain's tent, plodded homeward, feeling more tired than after a day's digging on the fortifications. Yet his fatigue was illuminated by the shimmering light of a fascinating hope.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SI AND SHORTY HAVE SOME FRIENDLY COMMERCE WITH THE REBEL PICKETS.

The 200th Ind. Volunteer Infantry had been pushed out to watch the crossings of Duck River and the movements of the rebels on the south bank of that narrow stream. The rebels, who had fallen into the incurable habit of objecting to everything that the "Yankees" did, seemed to have especial and vindictive repugnance to being watched.

Probably no man, except he be an actor or a politician, likes to be watched, but few ever showed themselves as spitefully resentful of observation as the rebels.

Co. Q was advanced to picket the north bank of the river, but the moment it reached the top of the hill overlooking the stream it had to deploy as skirmishers, and Enfield bullets began to sing viciously about its ears.

"Looks as if them fellers think we want to steal their old river and send it North," said Shorty, as he reloaded his gun after firing at a puff of smoke that had come out of the sumach bushes along the fence at the foot of the hill. "They needn't be so grouty. We don't want their river—only to use it awhile. They kin have it back agin after we're through with it."

"Blamed if that feller didn't make a good line shot," said Si, glancing up just above his head to where a twig had been clipped off the persimmon tree behind which he was standing. "He put up his sights a little too fur, or he'd 'a' got me."

Si took careful aim at where he supposed the lurking marksman to be and fired.

There was a waving of the tops of the bushes, as if the men concealed there had rushed out.

"Guess we both landed mighty close," said Shorty triumphantly. "They seem to have lost interest in this piece o' sidehill, anyway."

He and Si made a rush down the hill, and gained the covert of the fence just in time to see the rails splintered by a bunch of shots striking them.

"Lay down, Yanks!" called out Shorty cheerily, dropping into the weeds. "Grab a root!"

To the right of them they could see the rest of Co. Q going through similar performances.

Si and Shorty pushed the weeds aside, crawled cautiously to the fence, and looked through. There was a road on the other side of the fence, and beyond it a grove of large beech trees extending to the bank of the river. Half concealed by the trunk of one of these stood a tall, rather good-looking young man, with his gun raised and intently peering into the bushes. He had seen the tops stir, and knew that his enemies had gained their cover. He seemed expecting that they would climb the fence and jump down into the road. At a little distance to his right could be seen other men on the sharp lookout.

Shorty put his hand on Si to caution and repress him.

With his eyes fixed on the rebel, Shorty drew his gun toward him. The hammer caught on a trailing vine, and, forgetting himself, he gave it an impatient jerk. It went off, the bullet whistling past Shorty's head and the powder burning his face.

The rebel instantly fired in return, and cut the leaves about four feet above Shorty.

"Purty good shot that, Johnny," called out Shorty as he reloaded his gun; "but too low. It went between my legs. You haint no idee how tall I am."

"If I couldn't shoot no better'n you kin on a sneak,"

answered the rebel, his rammer ringing in his gun-barrel, "I wouldn't handle firearms. Your bullet went a mile over my head. Must've bin shootin' at an angel. But you Yanks can't shoot nary bit—you're too skeered."

"I made you hump out o' the bushes a few minutes ago," replied Shorty, putting on a cap. "Who was skeered then? You struck for tall timber like a cotton-tailed rabbit."

"I'll rabbit ye, ye nigger-lovin' whelp," shouted the rebel. "Take that," and he fired as close as he could to the sound of Shorty's voice.

Shorty had tried to anticipate his motion and fired first, but the limbs bothered his aim, and his bullet went a foot to the right of the rebel's head. It was close enough, however, to make the rebel cover himself carefully with the tree.

"That was a much better shot, Yank," he called out. "But ye orter do a powerful sight better'n that on a sneak. Ye'd never kill no deer, nor rebels nuther, with that kind o' shootin'. You Yanks are great on the sneak, but that's all the good it does yet ye can't shoot fer a handfull o' huckleberries."

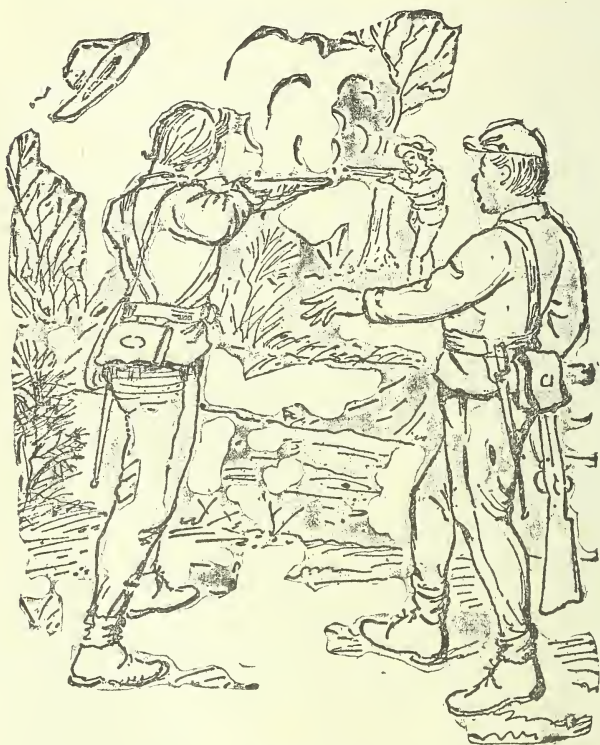
"Sneaks! Can't shoot!" roared Shorty. "I kin outshoot you or any other man in Jeff Davis's kingdom. I dare you to come out from behind your tree, and take a shot with me in the open, according to Hardee's tactics. Your gun's empty; so's mine. My chum here'll see fair play; and you kin bring your chum with you. Come out, you skulkin' brindle pup, and shoot man-fashion, if you dare."

"Ye can't dare me, ye nigger-stealin' blue-belly," shouted the rebel in return, coming out from behind his tree. Shorty climbed over the fence and stood at the edge of the road, with his gun at order arms. Si came out on Shorty's left, and a rebel appeared to the right of

the first. For a minute all stood in expectancy. Then Shorty spoke:

"I want nothin' but what's fair. Your gun's empty; so's mine. You probably know Hardee's tactics as well as I do."

"I'm up in Hardee," said the rebel with a firm voice.



THE DUEL.

"Well, then," continued Shorty, "let my chum here call off the orders for loadin' and firin', and we'll both go through 'em, and shoot at the word."

"Go ahead—I'm agreed," said the rebel briefly. Shorty nodded to Si.

"Carry arms," commanded Si.

Both brought their guns up to their right sides.]

"Present arms."

Both courteously saluted.

"Load in nine times—Load," ordered Si.

Both guns came down at the same instant, each man grasped his muzzle with his left hand, and reached for his cartridge-box, awaiting the next order.

"Handle cartridges,"

"Tear cartridges,"

"Charge cartridges," repeated Si slowly and distinctly. The rebel's second nodded approval of his knowledge of the drill, and sang out,

"Good soldiers, all of yo'uns."

"Draw rammer," continued Si.

"Turn rammer,"

"Ram cartridge."

Shorty punctiliously executed the three blows on the cartridge exacted by the regulations, and paused a breath for the next word. The rebel had sent his cartridge home with one strong thrust, but he saw his opponent's act and waited.

"Return rammer," commanded Si. He was getting a little nervous, but Shorty deliberately withdrew his ramrod, turned it, placed one end in the thimbles, deliberately covered the head with his little finger, exactly as the tactics prescribed, and sent it home with a single movement. The rebel had a little trouble in returning rammer, and Shorty and Si waited.

"Cast about,"

"Prime!"

Both men capped at the same instant.

"Ready!"

Shorty cocked his piece and glanced at the rebel, whose gun was at his side.

"Aim!"

Both guns came up like a flash.

Si's heart began thumping at a terrible rate. He was far more alarmed about Shorty than he had ever been about himself. Up to this moment he had hoped that Shorty's coolness and deliberation would "rattle" the rebel and make him fire wildly. But the latter, as Si expressed it afterward, "seemed to be made of mighty good stuff," and it looked as if both would be shot down.

"Fire!" shouted Si, with a perceptible tremor in his voice.

Both guns flashed at the same instant. Si saw Shorty's cap fly off, and him stagger and fall, while the rebel dropped his gun, and clapped his hand to his side. Si ran toward Shorty, who instantly sprang up again, rubbing his head, from which came a faint trickle of blood.

"He aimed at my head, and ~~just~~ scraped my scalp," he said. "Where'd I hit him? I aimed at his heart, and had a good bead."

"You seem to've struck him in the side," answered Si, looking at the rebel. "But not badly, for he's still standin' up. Mebbe you broke a rib though."

"Couldn't, if he's still up. I must file my trigger. Gun pulls too hard. I had a dead aim on his heart, but I seem to've pulled too much to the right."

"Say, I'll take a turn with you," said Si, picking up his gun and motioning with his left hand at the other rebel.

"All right," answered the other promptly. "My gun ain't loaded, though."

"I'll wait for you," said Si, looking at the cap on his gun. A loud cheer was heard from far to the right, and Co. Q was seen coming forward on a rush, with the rebels

in front running back to the river bank. Several were seen to be overtaken and forced to surrender.

The two rebels in front of the boys gave a startled look at their comrades, then at the boys, and turned to run. Si raised his gun to order them to halt.

"No," said Shorty. "Let 'em go. It was a fair bargain, and I'll stick to it. Skip out, Johnnies, for every cent you're worth."

The rebels did not wait for the conclusion of the sentence, but followed their comrades with alacrity.

The boys ran forward through the woods to the edge of the bank, and saw their opponents climbing up the opposite bank and getting behind the sheltering trees. Si waited till his particular one got good shelter behind a large sycamore, and then sent a bullet that cut closely above his head.

This was the signal for a general and spiteful fusillade from both sides of the river and all along the line. The rebels banged away as if in red-hot wrath at being run across the stream, and Co. Q retorted with such earnestness that another company was sent forward to its assistance, but returned when the Irish Lieutenant, who had gone forward to investigate, reported:

"Faith, it's loike the divil shearing a hog—all cry and no wool at all."

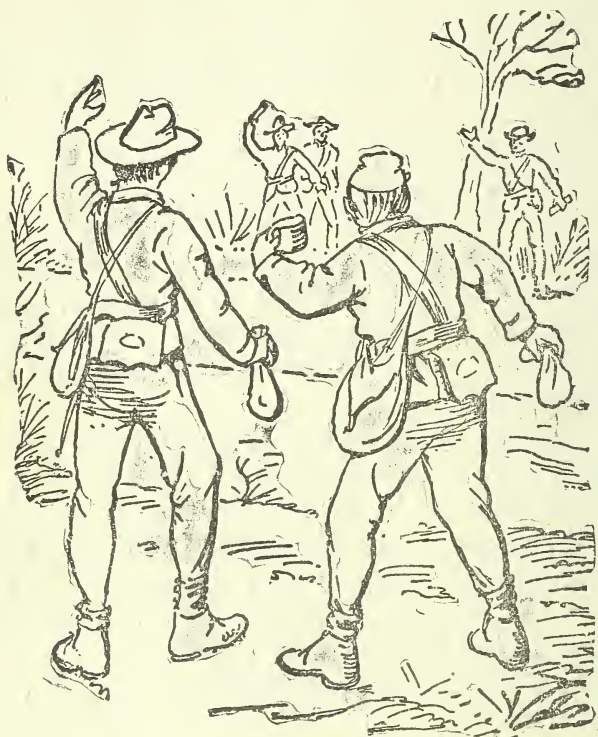
So it was. Both sides found complete shelter behind the giant trunks of the trees, and each fired at insignificant portions of the anatomy allowed to momentarily protrude beyond the impenetrable boles.

After this had gone on for about half an hour those across the river from Si and Shorty called out:

"Say, Yanks, ye can't shoot down a beech tree with a Springfield musket, nohow ye kin do hit. If we'uns haint killin' more o' yo'uns than yo'uns is a-killin' o' we'uns, we'uns air both wastin' a powerful lot o' powder an' lead

and good shootin'. What d' yo'uns say to Kings' excuse for awhile?"

"We're agreed," said Si promptly, stepping from behind the tree, and leaving his gun standing against it.



THE OVERTURE FOR TRADE.

"Hit's a go," responded the rebels, coming out disarmed. "We'uns won't shoot no more till ordered, an' then'll give yo'uns warnin' fust."

"All right; we'll give you warning before we shoot," coincided Si.

"Say, have yo'uns got any Yankee coffee that you'll trade for a good plug o' terbacker?" inquired the man whom Si had regarded as his particular antagonist.

"Yes," answered Si. "We've got a little. We'll give you a cupful for a long plug with none cut off."

"What kind of a cupful?" asked the bartering "Johnny."

"A good, big, honest cupful. One o' this kind," said Si, showing his.

"All right. Hit's to be strike measure," said the rebel. "Here's the plug," and he held up a long plug of "natural leaf."

"O. K.," responded Si. "Meet me half-way."

The truce had quickly extended, and the firing suspended all along the line of Co. Q. The men came out from behind their trees, and sat down on the banks in open view of one another.

Si filled his cup "heaping-full" with coffee, climbed down the bank and waded out into the middle of the water. The rebel met him there, while his companion and Shorty stood on the banks above and watched the trade.

"Y're givin' me honest measure, Yank," said the rebel, looking at the cup. "Now, if ye haint filled the bottom o' yer cup with coffee that's bin biled before, I'll say y're all right. Some o' yo'uns air so dog-gasted smart that y' poke off on we'uns coffee that's bin already biled, and swindle we'uns."

"Turn it out and see," said Si.

The rebel emptied the cup into a little bag, carefully scrutinizing the stream as it ran in. It was all fine, fragrant, roasted and ground coffee.

"Lord, thar's enough t' last me a month with keer," said the rebel, gazing unctuously at the rich brown grains. "I won't use more'n a spoonful a day, an' bile hit over twice. Yank, here's yer terbacker. I've made a good trade. Here's a Chattanooga paper I'll throw in to boot. Got a Northern paper about ye anywhar?"

Si produced a somewhat frayed Cincinnati Gazette.

"I can't read myself," said the rebel, as he tucked the paper away. "Never l'arned to. Pap wuz agin hit. Said hit made men lazy. He got erlong without readin', and raised the biggest fambly on Possum Crick. But thar's a feller in my mess kin read everything but the big words, and I like t' git a paper for him to read to the rest o' we'uns."

"Was your partner badly hurt by mine's shot?" asked Si.

"No. The bullet jest scraped the bone. He'll be likely to have a stitch in his side for awhile, but he's a very peart man, and won't mind that. I'm s'prised he didn't lay your partner out. He's the best shot in our company."

"Well, he was buckin agin a mighty good shot, and I'm surprised your partner's alive. I wouldn't 've given three cents for him when Shorty drawed down on him; but Shorty's bin off duty for awhile, and his gun's not in the best order. Howsumever, I'm awful glad that it come out as it did. His life's worth a dozen rebels."

"The blazes you say. I'd have you know, Yank, that one Conferderit is wuth a whole rijimint o' Lincoln hirelings. I'll"—

"O, come off—come off—that's more o' your old five-to-one gas," said Si irritatingly. "I thought we'd walloped that dumbed nonsense out o' your heads long ago. We've showed right along that, man for man, we're a right better'n you. We've always licked you when we've had anything like a fair show. At Stone River you had easy two men to our one, and yit we got away with you."

"Taint so. It's a lie. If hit wuzzent for the Dutch and Irish you hire, you couldn't fight we'uns at all."

"Look here, reb," said Si, getting hot around the ears, "I'm neither a Dutchman nor an Irishman; we haint a

half dozen in our company. I'm a better man than you've got in your regiment. Either me or Shorty kin lick any man you put up, Co. Q kin lick your company single-handed and easy, the 200th Injianny kin lick any regiment in the rebel army. To prove it, I kin lick you right here."



SI WANTS A FIGHT.

thrust the plug of tobacco into his blouse pocket and began rolling up his sleeves.

The rebel did not seem at all averse to the trial and squared off at him. Then Shorty saw the belligerent attitude and yelled:

"Come, Si. Don't fight there. That's no place. If you're goin' to fight, come up on level ground, where it

kin be fair and square. Come up here, or we'll go over there."

"O, come off," shouted the rebel on the other side. "Don't be a fool, Bill. Fist-foutin' don't settle nothin'. Come back here and git your gun if ye want to fout. But don't le's fout no more to-day. Thar's plenty of it for ter-morrer. Le's keep quiet and peaceful now. I want powerfully to take a swim. Air you fellers agreed?"

"Yes; yes," shouted Shorty. "You fellers keep to your side o' the river, and we will to ours."

The agreement was carried into instantaneous effect, and soon both sides of the stream were filled with laughing, romping, splashing men.

There was something very exhilarating in the cool, clear, mountain water of the stream. The boys got to wrestling, and Si came off victorious in two or three bouts with his comrades.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo," he shouted, imitating the crow of a rooster. "I kin duck any man in the 200th Injianny."

The challenge reached the ears of the rebel with whom Si had traded. He was not satisfied with the result of his conference.

"You kin crow over your fellers, Yank," he shouted; "but you dassent come to the middle an' try me two falls outen three."

Si immediately made toward him. They surveyed each other warily for a minute to get the advantages of the first clinch, when a yell came from the rebel side:

"Scatter, Confeds! Hunt yer holes, Yanks! The Kannel's a-comin'."

Both sides ran up their respective banks, snatched up their guns, took their places behind their trees, and opened a noisy but harmless fire.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SHORTY GETS A LETTER FROM BAD AX, WIS.

Shorty had always been conspicuously lacking in the general interest which his comrades had shown in the mails. Probably at some time in his life he had had a home like the rest of them, but for some reason home now played no part in his thoughts. The enlistment and muster-rolls stated that he was born in Indiana, but he was a stranger in the neighborhood when he enrolled himself in Co. Q.

His revelations as to his past were confined to memories of things which happened "when I was cuttin' wood down the Mississippi," or "when I was runnin' on an Ohio sternwheel."

He wrote no letters, and received none. And when the joyful cry, "Mail's come," would send everybody else in the regiment on the run to the Chaplain's tent, in eager anticipation, to jostle one another in impatience, until the contents of the mail-pouch were distributed, Shorty would remain indifferent in his tent, without an instant's interruption in his gun-cleaning, mending, or whatever task he might have in hand.

A change came over him after he sent his letter to Bad Ax, Wis. The cry, "Mail's come," would make him start, in spite of himself, and before he could think to maintain his old indifference. He was ashamed, lest he betray his heart's most secret thoughts.

The matter of the secure transmission of the mails between camp and home began to receive his earnest attention. He feared that the authorities were not taking

sufficient precautions. The report that John Morgan's guerrillas had captured a train between Louisville and Nashville, rifled the mail-car, and carried off the letters, filled him with burning indignation, both against Morgan and his band and the Generals who had not long ago exterminated that pestiferous crowd.

He had some severe strictures on the slovenly way in which the mail was distributed from the Division and Brigade Headquarters to the regiments. It was a matter, he said, which could not be done too carefully. It was a great deal more important than the distribution of rations. A man would much rather lose several days' rations than a letter from home. He could manage in some way to get enough to live on, but nothing would replace a lost letter.

Then, he would have fits of silent musing, sometimes when alone, sometimes when with Si in the company, over the personality of the fair stocking-knitter of Wisconsin and the letter he had sent her. He would try to recall the exact wording of each sentence he had laboriously penned, and wonder how it impressed her, think how it might have been improved, and blame himself for not having been more outspoken in his desire to hear from her again. He would steal off into the brush, pull out the socks and letter, which he kept carefully wrapped up in a sheet of the heavy letter paper, and read over the letter carefully again, although he knew every word of it by heart. These fits alarmed Si.

"I'm afeared," he confided to some cronies, "that rebel bullet hurt Shorty more'n he'll let on. He's not actin' like hisself at times. That bullet scraped so near his thinkery that it may have addled it. It was an awful close shave."

"Better talk to the Surgeon," said they. "Glancing bullets sometimes hurt worse'n they seem to."

"No, the bullet didn't hurt Shorty, any more than make a scratch," said the Surgeon cheerfully when Si laid the case before him. "I examined him carefully. That fellow's head is so hard that no mere scraping is going to affect it. You'd have to bore straight through it, and I'd want at least a six-pounder to do it with if I was going to undertake the job. An Indiana head may not be particularly fine, but it is sure to be awfully solid and tough. No; his system's likely to be out of order. You rascalions will take no care of yourselves, in spite of all that I can say, but will eat and drink as if you were ostriches. He's probably a little off his feed, and a good dose of blue-mass followed up with quinine will bring him around all right. Here, take these, and give them to him."

The Surgeon was famous for prescribing blue-mass and quinine for every ailment presented to him, from sore feet to "shell fever." Si received the medicines with a proper show of thankfulness, saluted, and left. As he passed through the clump of bushes he was tempted to add them to the collection of little white papers which marked the trail from the Surgeon's tent, but solicitude for his comrade restrained him. The Surgeon was probably right, and it was Si's duty to do all that he could to bring Shorty around again to his normal condition. But how in the world was he going to get his partner to take the medicine? Shorty had the resolute antipathy to drugs common to all healthy men.

It was so grave a problem that Si sat down on a log to think about it. As was Si's way, the more he thought about it, the more determined he became to do it, and when Si Klegg determined to do a thing, that thing was pretty nearly as good as done.

"I kin git him to take the quinine easy enough," he mused. "All I've got to do is to put it in a bottle o' whisky, and he'd drink it if there wuz 40 doses o' quinine

in it. But the bluemass's a very different thing. He's got to swaller it in a lump, and what in the world kin I put it in that he'll swaller whole?"

Si wandered over to the Sutler's in hopes of seeing something there that would help him. He was about despairing when he noticed a boy open a can of large, yellow peaches.

"The very thing," said Si, slapping his thigh. "Say you man, gi' me a can o' peaches jest like them."

Si took his can and carefully approached his tent, that he might decide upon his plan before Shorty could see him and his load. He discovered that Shorty was sitting at a little distance, with his back to him, cleaning his gun, which he had taken apart.

"Bully," thought Si. "Just the thing. His hands are dirty and greasy, and he won't want to tech anything to eat."

He slipped into the tent, cut open the can, took out a large peach with a spoon, laid the pellet of blue mass in it, laid another slice of peach upon it, and then came around in front of Shorty, holding out the spoon.

"Open your mouth and shut your eyes, Shorty," he said. "I saw some o' the nicest canned peaches down at the Sutler's, and I suddenly got hungry for some. I bought a can and brung 'em up to the tent. Jest try 'em."

He stuck the spoon out towards Shorty's mouth. The latter, with his gunlock in one hand and a greasy rag in the other, looked at the tempting morsel, opened his mouth, and the deed was done.

"Must've left the stone in that peach," he said, as he gulped it down.

"Mebbe so," said Si, with a guilty flush, and pretending to examine the others. "But I don't find none in the rest. Have another?"

Shorty swallowed two or three spoonfuls more, and then gasped:

"They're awful nice, Si, but I've got enough. Keep the rest for yourself."

Si went back to the tent and finished the can with mingled emotions of triumph at having succeeded, and of contrition at playing a trick on his partner. He decided



SI GIVES SHORTY BLUEMASS.

to make amends for the latter by giving Shorty an unusually large quantity of whisky to take with his quinine.

Si was generally very rigid in his temperance ideas. He strongly disapproved of Shorty's drinking, and always interposed all the obstacles he could in the way of it. But this was an extraordinary case,—it would be

"using liquor for a medicinal purpose,"—and his conscience was quieted.

Co. Q had one of those men—to be found in every company—who can get whisky under apparently any and all circumstances. In every company there is always one man who seemingly can find something to get drunk on in the midst of the Desert of Sahara. To Co. Q's representative of this class Si went, and was piloted to where, after solemn assurances against "giving away," he procured a half-pint of fairly good applejack, into which he put his doses of quinine.

In the middle of the night Shorty woke up with a yell.

"Great Cesar's ghost!" he howled, "what's the matter with me? I'm sicker'n a dog. Must've bin them dodgasted peaches. Si, don't you feel nothin'?"

"No," said Si sheepishly; "I'm all right. Didn't you eat nothin' else but them?"

"Naw," said Shorty disgustedly. "Nothin' but my usual load o' hardtack and pork. Yes, I chewed a piece o' sassafras root that one of the boys dug up."

"Must've bin the sassafras root," said Si. He hated to lie, and made a resolution that he would make a clean breast to Shorty—at some more convenient time. It was not opportune now. "That must've been a sockdologer of a dose the Surgeon gave me," he muttered to himself.

Shorty continued to writhe and howl, and Si made a hypocritical offer of going for the Surgeon, but Shorty vetoed that emphatically.

"No; blast old Sawbones," he said. "He won't do nothin' but give me bluemass and quinine, and I never could nor would take bluemass. It's only fit for horses and hogs."

Toward morning Shorty grew quite weak, and correspondingly depressed.

"Si," said he, "I may not git over this. This may be the breakin' out o' the cholera that the folks around here say comes every seven years and kills off the strangers. Si, I'll tell you a secret. A letter may come for me. If I don't git over this, and the letter comes, I want you to burn it up without reading it, and write a letter to Miss Jerusha Ellen Briggs, Bad Ax, Wis., tellin' her that I died like a man and a soldier, and with her socks on, defendin' his country."

Si whistled softly to himself. "I'll do it, Shorty," he said, and repeated the address to make sure.

The crisis soon passed, however, and the morning found Shorty bright and cheerful, though weak.

Si was puzzled how to get the whisky to Shorty. It would never do to let him know that he had gotten it especially for him. That would have been so contrary to Si's past as to arouse suspicion. He finally decided to lay it where it would seem that someone passing had dropped it, and Shorty could not help finding it. The plan worked all right. Shorty picked it up in a few minutes after Si had deposited it, and made quite an ado over his treasure trove.

"Splendid applejack," he said, tasting it; "little bitter, but that probably comes from their using dogwood in the fires when they're 'stillin'. They know that dogwood'll make the liquor bitter, but they're too all-fired lazy to go after any other kind o' wood."

He drank, and as he drank his spirits rose. After the first dram he thought he would clean around the tent, and make their grounds look neater than anybody else's. After the second he turned his attention to his arms and accouterments. After the third he felt like going out on a scout and finding some rebels, to vary the monotony of the camp-life. After the fourth. "Groundhog," unluckily

for himself, came along, and Shorty remembered that he had long owed the teamster a licking, and he felt that the debt should not be allowed to run any longer. He ordered Groundhog to halt and receive his dues. The teamster demurred, but Shorty was obdurate, and began preparations to put his intention into operation, when the Orderly-Sergeant came down through the company street distributing mail.



SHORTY WANTS TO FIGHT GROUNDHOG.

"Shorty," he said, entirely ignoring the bellicosity of the scene, "here's a letter for you."

Shorty's first thought was to look at the postmark. Sure enough, it was Bad Ax, Wis. Instantly his whole

demeanor changed. Here was something a hundred times more important than licking any teamster that ever lived.

"Git out, you scab," he said contemptuously, "I haint no time to fool with you now. You'll keep. This won't."

Groundhog mistook the cause of his escape. "O, you're powerful anxious to fight, ain't you, till you find I'm ready for you, and then you quile down. I'll let you know, sir, that you mustn't give me no more o' your sass. I won't stand it from you. You jest keep your mouth shet after this, if you know when you're well off."

The temptation would have been irresistible to Shorty at any other time, but now he must go off somewheres where he could be alone with his letter, and to the amazement of all the spectators he made no reply to the teamster's gibes, but holding the precious envelope firmly in his hand, strode off to the seclusion of a neighboring laurel thicket.

His first thought, as he sat down and looked the envelope over again, was shame that it had come to him when he was under the influence of drink. He remembered the writer's fervent Christianity, and it seemed to him that it would be a gross breach of faith for him to open and read the letter while the fumes of whisky were on his breath. He had a struggle with his burning desire to see the inside of the envelope, but he conquered, and put the letter back in his pocket until he was thoroughly sober.

But he knew not what to do to fill up the time till he could conscientiously open the letter. He thought of going back and fulfilling his long-delayed purpose of thrashing Groundhog, but on reflection this scarcely commended itself as a fitting prelude.

He heard voices approaching—one sympathetic and encouraging, the other weak, pain-breathing, almost de-

spairing. He looked out and saw the Chaplain helping back to the hospital a sick man who had over-estimated his strength and tried to reach his company. The man sat down on a rock, in utter exhaustion.

Shorty thrust the letter back into his blouse-pocket, sprang forward, picked the man up in his strong arms, and carried him bodily to the hospital. It taxed his strength to the utmost, but it sobered him, and cleared his brain.



Remy

SHORTY READING THE LETTER.

He returned to his covert, took out his letter, and again scanned its exterior carefully. He actually feared to open it, but at last drew his knife and carefully slit one side.

He unfolded the inclosure as carefully as if it had been a rare flower, and with palpitating heart slowly spelled out the words, one after another:

“Bad Ax, Wisconsin,

“April the Twenty-First, 1863.

“Mister Daniel Elliott, Company Q, 200th Indiana Volunteer Infantry.

“Respected Sir: I taik my pen in hand toe inform you that I am wel, and hoap that you aire injoying the saim blessing. For this, God be prazed and magnified forever.”

“Goodness, how religious she is,” said he, stopping to ruminate. “How much nicer it makes a woman to be pious. It don’t hurt a man much to be a cuss—at least while he’s young—but I want a woman to be awfully religious. It sets her off more’n anything else.”

He continued his spelling exercise:

“I am verry glad that my sox reached you all rite, that they fell into the hands of a braiv, pious Union soldier, and he found them nice.”

“Brave, pious Union soldier,” he repeated to himself, with a whistle. “Jewhilikins, I’m glad Bad Ax, Wis., is so fur away that she never heard me makin’ remarks when a mule-team’s stalled. But I must git a brace on myself, and clean up my langwidge for inspection-day.”

He resumed the spelling:

“I done the best I could on them, and moren that no one can do. Wimmen cant fite in this cruel war, but they ought all to do what they can. I only wish I could do more. But the wimmen must stay at home and watch and wait, while the men go to the front.”

“That’s all right, Miss Jerusha Ellen Briggs,” said he, with more satisfaction. “You jest stay at home and watch and wait, and I’ll try to do fightin’ enough for

both of us. I'll put in some extra licks in future on your account, and they won't miss you from the front."

The next paragraph read:

"I should like to hear more of you and your regiment. The only time I ever heard of the 200th Indiana regiment was in a letter writ home by one of our Wisconsin boys and published in the Bad Ax Grindstone, in which he said they wuz brigaded with the 200th Indiana, a good fighting regiment, but which would stele even the shoes off the brigade mules if they wuzzent watched, and sumtimes when they wuz. Ime sorry to hear that any Union soldier is a thief. I know that our boys from Wisconsin would rather die than stele."

"Steal! The 200th Injianny steal!" Shorty flamed out in a rage. "Them flabbergasted, knock-kneed, wall-eyed Wisconsin whelps writin' home that the Injiannians are thieves! The idee o' them long-haired, splay-footed lumbermen, them chuckle-headed, wap-sided, white-pine butchers talking about anybody else's honesty. Why, they wuz born stealin'. They never knowed anything else. They'd steal the salt out o' your hard-tack. They'd steal the lids off the Bible. They talk about the 200th Injianny! I'd like to find the liar that writ that letter. I'd literally pound the head offen him."

It was some time before he could calm himself down sufficiently to continue his literary exercise. Then he made out:

"Spring's lait here, but things is looking very well. Wheat wintered good, and a big crop is expected. We had a fine singing-school during the Winter, but the protracted meeting drawed off a good many. We doant complain, however, for the revival brought a great many into the fold. No moar at present, but beleave me

"Sincerely Your Friend,

"Jerusha Ellen Briggs."

Shorty's heart almost choked him when he finished. It was the first time in his life that he had received a letter from any woman. It was the first time since his mother's days that any woman had shown the slightest interest in his personality. And, true man like, his impulses were to exalt this particular woman into something above the mere mortal.

Then came a hot flush of indignation that the Wisconsin men should malign his regiment, which, of course, included him, to the mind of such a being. He burned to go over and thrash the first Wisconsin man he should meet.

"Call us thieves; say we'll steal," he muttered, as he walked toward the Wisconsin camp. "I'll learn 'em different."

He did not see anybody in the camp that he could properly administer this needed lesson to. All the vigorous, able-bodied members seemed to be out on drill or some other duty, leaving only a few sick moping around the tents.

Shorty's attention was called to a spade lying temptingly behind one of the tents. He and Si had badly wanted a spade for several days. Here was an opportunity to acquire one. Shorty sauntered carelessly around to the rear of the tent, looked about to see that no one was observing, picked up the implement and walked off with it with that easy, innocent air that no one could assume with more success than he when on a predatory expedition.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SI HAS A HARD TIME TRYING TO KEEP WHISKY OUT OF CAMP.

"Detail for guard to-morrow," sang out the Orderly-Sergeant, after he had finished the evening roll-call: "Bailey, Belcher, Doolittle, Elliott, Fracker, Gleason, Hendricks, Hummerson, Long, Mansur, Nolan, Thompson."

"Corp'l Klegg, you will act as Sergeant of the Guard.

"Dan Elliott will act as Corporal of the Guard."

It is one of the peculiarities of men that the less they have to do the less they want to do. The boys of Co. Q were no different from the rest. When they were in active service a more lively, energetic crowd could not be found in the army. They would march from daybreak till midnight, and build roads, dig ditches, and chop trees on the way. They were ready and willing for any service, and none were louder than they in their condemnation when they thought that the officers did not order done what should be. But when lying around camp, with absolutely nothing to do but ordinary routine, they developed into the laziest mortals that breathed. To do a turn of guard duty was a heart-breaking affliction, and the Orderly-Sergeant's announcement of those who were detailed for the morrow brought forth a yell of protest from every man whose name was called.

"I only come off guard day before yesterday," shouted Bailey.

"I'm sick, and can't walk a step," complained Belcher, who had walked 15 miles the day before, hunting "pies-an'-milk."

"That blamed Orderly's got a spite at me; he'd keep me on guard every day in the week," grumbled Doolittle.

"I was on fatigue dooty only yesterday," protested Fracker, who had to help carry the company rations from the Commissary's tent.

"I'm goin' to the Surgeon an' git an excuse," said Gleason, who had sprained his wrist a trifle in turning a handspring.

So it went through the whole list.

"I want to see every gun spick-and-span, every blouse brushed and buttoned, and every shoe neatly blacked, when I march you up to the Adjutant," said the Orderly, entirely oblivious to the howls. "If any of you don't, he'll have a spell of digging up roots on the parade. I won't have such a gang of scarecrows as I have had to march out the last few days. You fellows make a note of that, and govern yourselves accordingly."

"Right face—Break ranks—March!"

"Corp'l Klegg," said the Officer of the Day the next morning, as Si was preparing to relieve the old guard, "the Colonel is very much worked up over the amount of whisky that finds its way into camp. Now that we are out here by ourselves we certainly ought to be able to control this. Yet there was a disgusting number of drunken men in camp yesterday, and a lot of trouble that should not be. The Colonel has talked very strongly on this subject, and he expects us to-day to put a stop to this. I want you to make an extra effort to keep whisky out. I think you can do it if you try real hard."

"I'll do my best, sir," said Si, saluting.

"Shorty," Si communed with his next in rank before they started on their rounds with the first relief, "we must see that there's no whisky brung into camp this day."

"You jest bet your sweet life there won't be, either,"

returned Shorty. He felt not a little elated over his brevet rank and the responsibilities of his position as Corporal of the Guard. "This here camp'll be as dry as the State o' Maine to-day."

It was a hot, dull day, with little to occupy the time of those off guard. As usual, Satan was finding "some mischief still for idle hands to do."

After he put on the first relief, Si went back to the guard tent and busied himself awhile over the details of work to be found there. There were men under sentence of hard labor that he had to find employment for, digging roots, cleaning up the camp, chopping wood and making trenches. He got the usual chin-music from those whom he set to enforced toil, about the injustice of their sentences and "the airs that some folks put on when they wear a couple of stripes," but he took this composedly, and after awhile went the rounds to look over his guard-line, taking Shorty with him.

Everything seemed straight and soldierly, and they sat down by a cool spring in a little shady hollow.

"Did you ever notice, Shorty," said Si, speculatively, as he looked over the tin cup of cool water he was sipping, "how long and straight and string-like the cat-brier grows down here in this country? You see 25 or 30 feet of it at times no thicker'n wool-twine. Now, there's a piece layin' right over there, on t'other side o' the branch, more'n a rod long, and no thicker'n a rye straw."

"I see it, an' I never saw a piece o' cat-brier move end-wise before," said Shorty, fixing his eyes on the string-like green.

"As sure's you're alive, it is movin'," said Si, starting to rise.

"Set still, keep quiet an' watch," admonished Shorty. "You'll find out more."

Si sat still and looked. The direction the brier was

moving was toward the guard-line, some 100 feet away to the left. About the same distance to the right was a thicket of alders, where Si thought he heard voices. There were indications in the weeds that the cat-brier extended to there.

The brier maintained its outward motion. Presently a clump of rags was seen carried along by it.

"They're sending out their money for whisky," whispered Shorty. "Keep quiet, and we'll confiscate the stuff when it comes in."

They saw the rag move straight toward the guard-line, and pass under the log on which the sentry walked when he paced his beat across the branch. It finally disappeared in a bunch of willows.

Presently a bigger rag came out from the willows, in response to the backward movement of the long cat-brier, and crawled slowly back under the log and into camp. As it came opposite Si jumped out, put his foot on the cat-brier, and lifted up the rag. He found, as he had expected, that it wrapped up a pint flask of whisky.

"O, come off, Si; come off, Shorty!" appealed some of Co. Q from the alders. "Drop that. You ain't goin' to be mean, boys. You don't need to know nothin' about that, an' why go makin' yourselves fresh when there's no necessity? We want that awful bad, and we've paid good money for it."

"No, sir," said Shorty sternly, as he twisted the bottle off, and smashed it on the stones. "No whisky goes into this camp. I'm astonished at you. Whisky's a cuss. It's the bane of the army. It's the worm that never dies. Its feet lead down to hell. Who hath vain babblings? Who hath redness of eyes? The feller that drinks likker, and especially Tennessee rotgut."

"O, come off; stop that dinged preaching, Shorty," said one impatiently. "There's nobody in this camp that

likes whisky better'n you do; there's nobody that'll go further to git it, an' there's nobody up to more tricks to beat the guard."

"What I do as a private soldier, Mr. Blakesley," said Shorty with dignity, "haint nothing to do with my conduct when I'm charged with responsible dooty. It's my dooty to stop the awful practice o' likker-drinkin' in this camp, an' I'm goin' to do it, no matter what the cost. You jest shet up that clam-shell o' your'n an' stop interfering with your officers."

Si and Shorty went outside the lines to the clump of willows, but they were not quick enough to catch Groundhog, the teamster, and the civilian whom our readers will remember as having his head shaved in the camp at Murfreesboro' some weeks before. They found, however, a jug of new and particularly rasping apple-jack. There was just an instant of wavering in Shorty's firmness when he uncorked the jug and smelled its contents. He lifted it to his lips, to further confirm its character, and Si trembled, for he saw the longing in his partner's eyes. The latter's hand shook a little as the first few drops touched his tongue, but with the look of a hero he turned and smashed the jug on a stone.

"You're solid, Shorty," said Si.

"Yes, but it was an awful wrench. Le's git away from the smell o' the stuff," answered Shorty. "I'm afraid it'll be too much for me yit."

"Corporal of the Guard, Post No. 1,"

"Sergeant of the Guard, Post No. 1,"

came down the line of sentries as the two boys were sauntering back into camp.

"Somethin's happening over there at the 'gate,'" said Si, and they quickened their steps in the direction of the main entrance to the camp.

They found there a lank, long-haired, ragged Tennes-

sean, with a tattered hat of white wool on his head. His scanty whiskers were weather-beaten, he had lost most of his front teeth, and as he talked he spattered everything around with tobacco-juice. He rode on a blind, raw-bone horse, which, with a dejected, broken-down mule, was attached by ropes, fragments of straps, withes, and pawpaw bark to a shackly wagon.

In the latter were some strings of dried apples, a pile of crescents of dried pumpkins, a sack of meal, a few hands of tobacco, and a jug of buttermilk.

"I want t' go inter the camps an' sell a leetle jag o' truck," the native explained, as he drenched the surrounding weeds with tobacco-juice. "My ole woman's powerful sick an' ailin', an' I need some money awfully t' git her some quinine. Yarbs don't seem t' do her no sort o' good. She must have some Yankee quinine, and she's nigh dead fur some Yankee coffee. This war's mouty hard on po' people. Hit's jest killin' 'em by inches, by takin' away their coffee an' quinine. I'm a Union man, an' allers have bin."

"You haint got any whisky in that wagon, have you?" asked Si.

"O, Lord, no; nary mite. You don't think I'd try t' take whisky into camp, do you? I'm not sich a bad man as that. Besides, whar'd I git whisky? The war's broke up all the 'stilleries in the country. What the Confedrits didn't burn yo'uns did. I've bin sufferin' for months fur a dram o' whisky, an' as fur my ole woman, she's nearly died. That's the reason the yarbs don't do her no good. She can't get no whisky to soak 'em in."

"He's entirely too talkative about the wickedness o' bringin' whisky into camp," whispered Shorty. "He's bin there before. He's an old hand at the business."

"Sure you've got no whisky?" said Si.

"Sartin, gentlemen; sarch my wagon, if you don't take

my word. I only wish I knowed whar thar wuz some whisky. I'd walk 20 miles in the rain t' git one little flask fur my ole woman and myself. I tell you, thar haint a drap t' be found in the hull Duck River Valley. 'Stilleries all burnt, I tell you." And in the earnestness of his protestations he sprayed his team, himself, and the neighboring weeds with liquid tobacco.

Si stepped back and carefully searched the wagon, opening the meal sack, uncorking the buttermilk jug, and turning over the dried apples, pumpkins and tobacco. There certainly was no whisky there.

Shorty stood leaning on his musket and looking at the man. He was pretty sure that the fellow had had previous experience in running whisky into camp, and was up to the tricks of the trade. Instead of a saddle the man had under him an old calico quilt, whose original gaudy colors were sadly dimmed by the sun, rain, and dirt. Shorty stepped forward and lifted one corner. His suspicions were right. It had an under pocket, in which was a flat, half-pint flask with a cob stopper, and filled with apple-jack so new that it was as colorless as water.

"I wuz jest bringin' that 'ere in fur you, Capting," said the Tennessean, with a profound wink and an unabashed countenance. "Stick hit in your pocket, quick. None o' the rest 's seed you."

Shorty flung the bottle down and ordered the man off his horse. The quilt was examined. It contained a half-dozen more flasks, each holding a "half-pint of throat-scorch and at least two fights," as Shorty expressed it. A clumsy leather contrivance lay on the hames of the mule. Flasks were found underneath this, and the man himself was searched. More flasks were pulled out from the tail pockets of his ragged coat; from his breast; from the crown of his ragged hat.

"Well," said Shorty, as he got through, "you're a regler

grogshop on wheels. All you need is a lot o' loafers talkin' politics, a few picturs o' racin' hosses and some customers buried in the village graveyard to be a first-class bar-room. Turn around and git back to that ole woman o' your'n, or we'll make you sicker'n she is."

Si and Shorty marched around with the second relief, and then sat down to talk over the events of the morning.

"I guess we've purty well settled the whisky business for to-day, at least," said Si. "The Colonel can't complain of us. I don't think we'll have any more trouble. Seems to me that there can't be no more whisky in this part o' Tennessee, from the quantity we've destroyed."

"Don't be too dinged sure o' that," said Shorty. "Whisky seems to brew as naterally in this country as the rosin to run out o' the pine trees. I never saw sich a country fur likker. They have more stills in Tennessee than blacksmith shops, and they work stiddier."

Si looked down the road and saw returning a wagon which had been sent out in the morning for forage. It was well loaded, and the guards who were marching behind had a few chickens and other supplies that they had gathered up.

"Boys seem to be purty fresh, after their tramp," said he, with the first thought of a soldier looking at marching men. "They've all got their guns at carry arms. I noticed that as they came over the hill."

"Yes," answered Shorty, after a glance, "and they're holdin' 'em up very stiff an' straight. That gives me an idee. Le's go over there an' take a look at 'em."

Shorty had sniffed at a trick that he had more than once played in getting the forbidden beverage past the lynx-eyed sentry.

"Don't you find it hard work to march at rout-step with your guns at a carry?" he said insinuatingly. "No need

o' dom' that except on parade or drill. Right-shoulder-shift or arms-at-will is the thing when you're on the road."

"H-s-sh," said the leading file, with a profound wink and a sidelong glance at Si. "Keep quiet, Shorty," he added in a stage whisper. "We'll give you some. It's all right. We'll whack up fair."

"No, it ain't all right," said Shorty, with properly offended official dignity. "Don't you dare offer to bribe me, Buck Harper, when I'm on duty. Hand me that gun this minute."

Harper shamefacedly handed over the musket, still holding it carefully upright. Shorty at once reversed it, and a stream of whisky ran out upon the thirsty soil,

Si grasped the situation, and disarmed the others with like result.

"I ought to put every one o' you in the guardhouse for this. It's lucky that the Officer of the Guard wasn't here. He'd have done it. There he comes now. Skip out-after the wagon, quick, before he gits on to you."

"What next?" sighed Si. "Is the whole world bent on bringin' whisky into this camp? Haint they got none for the others?"

"Sergeant of the Guard, Post No. 1," rang out upon the hot air. Si walked over again to the entrance, and saw seeking admission a tall, bony, woman, wearing a dirty and limp sunbonnet, and smoking a corn-cob pipe. She was mounted on a slab-sided horse, with ribs like a washboard, and carried a basket on her arm covered with a coarse cloth none too clean.

"Looks as if she'd bin picked before she was ripe and got awfully warped in the dryin'. All the same she's loaded with whisky," commented Shorty as the woman descended from her saddle and approached the sentry with an air of resolute demand.

"You haint got no right to stop me, young feller," she said. "I come in hyar every day an' bring pies. Your Jinerul said I could, an' he wanted me to. His men want my pies, an' they do 'em good. Hit's home-cookin,' an' takes the taste o' the nasty camp vittles out o' their mouths, an' makes 'em healthy. You jest raise yer gun, an' let me go right in, or I'll tell yer Jinerul, an' he'll make it warm fur yer. I've got a pass from him."

"Let me see your pass," said Si, stepping forward. The woman unhooked her linsey dress, fumbled around in the recesses, and finally produced a soiled and crumpled paper, which, when straightened out, read:

"Mrs. Sarah Bolster has permission to pass in and out of the camp of the 200th Indiana Volunteer Infantry.

"By order of Col. Quackenbush.

"D. L. Blakemore, Lieut. & Adj't."

"What've you got in that basket?" asked Si, still hesitating.

"Pies," she answered confidently. "The best pies you ever seed. Some of 'em punkin; but the best of 'em dried apple, with lots o' 'lasses in fur sweetenin'. Your mother never baked better pies 'n 'em."

"To my mind," muttered Shorty, as he stepped forward to investigate the basket, "she's the kind o' a woman I'd like to have bake pies for a gang o' State's prison birds that I wanted to kill off without the trouble o' hangin'. Say, ma'am, are your pies pegged or sewed? What'd you use for shortenin'--injury rubber or Aunt Jemima's plaster?" he continued as he turned back the cloth and surveyed the well-known specimens of mountain baking which were as harmful to Uncle Sam's boys as the bullets of their enemies.

"Young feller, none o' yer sass," she said severely. "Them's better pies than ye're used ter. Folks that's never had nothin' air allers the most partickeler, an'

turnin' up thar noses at rayly good things. Don't fool with me no more, but let me go on inter camp, fur the soljers air expectin' me."

"Sure you haint got no whisky down in the bottom o' that basket?" said Si, pushing the pies about a little, to get a better look.

The indignation of the woman at this insinuation was stunning. She took her pipe out of her mouth to better express her contempt for men who would insult a Southern lady by such a hint—one, too, that had been of so much benefit to the soldiers by toiling over the hot oven to prepare for them food more acceptable than the coarse rations their stingy Government furnished them. She had never been so insulted in her life, and she would bring down on them dire punishment from the Colonel.

Several experiences with the tongue-lashings of Southern viragoes had made Si and Shorty less impressed by them than they had been earlier in their service. Still, they had the healthy young man's awe of anything that wore skirts, and the tirade produced its effect, but not strong enough to eradicate the belief that she was a whisky-bringer. While she stormed Si kept his eyes fixed upon the scant linsey dress which draped her tall form. Presently he said to Shorty:

"What do you think? Shall we let her go in?"

Shorty whispered back with great deliberation:

"Si, what I know about the female form don't amount to shucks. Least of all the Tennessee female form. But I've been lookin' that 'ere woman over carefully while she's bin jawin', an' while she's naturally covered with knots and knobs in places where it seems to me that women generally don't have 'em, I can't help believin' that she's got some knots and knobs that naturally don't belong to her. In other words, she's got a whole lot o' flasks o' whisky under her skirts."

"Jest what I've been suspicionin'," said Si. "I've heard that that's the way lots o' whisky is brung into camp. Shorty, as Corporal o' the Guard, it's your duty to search her."

"What!" yelled Shorty, horror-struck at the immodest thought. "Si Klegg, are you gone plum crazy?"

"Shorty," said Si firmly, "it's got to be done. She's got a pass, and the right to go into camp. We're both o' the opinion that she's carryin' in whisky. If she was a man there'd be no doubt that she'd have to be searched. I don't understand that the law knows any difference in persons. No matter what you may think about it, it is your duty, as Corporal o' the Guard, to make the search."

"No, sir-ree," insisted Shorty. "You're Sergeant o' the Guard, and it's your dooty to make all searches."

"Shorty," expostulated Si, "I'm much younger and modester'n you are, an' haint seen nearly so much o' the world. You ought to do this. Besides, you're under my orders, as Actin' Corporal. I order you to make the search."

"Si Klegg," said Shorty firmly, "I'll see you and all the Corporals and Sergeants betwixt here and Washington in the middle o' next week before I'll do it. You may buck-and-gag me, and tie me up by the thumbs, and then I won't. I resign my position as Corporal right here, and'll take my gun and go on post."

"What in the world are we goin' to do?" said Si desperately. "If we let her in, she'll fill the camp full o' whisky, and she'll have to go in, unless we kin show some reason for keepin' her out. Hold on; I've got an idee."

He went up to the woman and said:

"You say you want to go into camp to sell your pies?"

"Yes, sir, an' I want to go in right off—no more foolin' around," she answered tartly.

"How many pies've you got?"

She went through a laborious counting, and finally announced: "Eight altogether."

"How much are they worth?"

"Fifty cents apiece."

"Very good," answered Si, taking some money from his pocket. "That comes to \$4. I'll take the lot and treat the boys. Here's your money. Now you've got no more business in camp, jest turn around and mosey for home. You've made a good day's business, and ought to be satisfied.

The woman scowled with disappointment. But she wisely concluded that she had better be content with the compromise, remounted her horse and disappeared down the road.

"That was a sneak out of a difficulty," Si confessed to Shorty; "but you were as big a coward as I was."

"No, I wasn't," insisted Shorty, still watchful. "You'd no right to order me do something that you was afraid to do yourself. That's no kind o' officering."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CHUMS HEAR FROM THE JEW SPY, AND SHORTY HAS AN ADVENTURE.

"I wonder what has become of our Jew spy, Shorty?" said Si, as he and Shorty sat on the bank of Duck River and watched the rebel pickets lounging under the beeches on the other side. "We haint heard nothin' of him for more'n a month now."

"He's probably hung," answered Shorty. "He was entirely too smart to live long. A man can't go on always pokin' his finger into a rattlesnake's jaw without gittin' it nipped sooner or later."

"I'm looking fur a man called Si Klegg," they heard behind them. Looking around they saw the tall, gaunt woman whom they had turned back from entering the camp a few days before, under the belief that she was trying to smuggle in whisky.

"What in the world can she want o' me?" thought Si; but he answered,

"That's my name. What'll you have?"

A flash of recognition filled at once her faded blue eyes. Without taking her pipe from between her yellow, snaggly teeth she delivered a volley of tobacco-juice at an unoffending morning-glory, and snapped out:

"O, y'r him air, ye? Y'r the dratted measley sapsucker that bounced me 'bout takin' likker inter camp. What bizniss wuz hit o' your'n whether I tuk likker in or not? Jest wanted t' be smart, didn't ye? Jest wanted t' interfere with a lone, lorn widder lady makin' a honest livin' for herself and 10 children. My ole man ketched the black ager layin' out in the brush to dodge the conscript-

ers. It went plumb to his heart an' killed him. He wa'n't no great loss, nohow, fur he'd eat more in a week than he'd kill, ketch, or raise in a year. When his light went out I'd only one less mouth to feed, and got rid o' his jawin' an' cussin' all the time. But that hain't nothin' t' do with you. You 's jest puttin' on a leetle authority kase ye could. But all men air alike that-away. Elect a man Constable, an' he wants t' put on more airs than the Guv'nor; marry him, an' he makes ye his slave."

"I should think it'd be a bold man that'd try to make you his slave, Madam," Si ventured.

"Y' she'd think," she retorted, with her arms akimbo. "Who axed y' t' think, young feller? What d' y' do hit with? Why d' y' strain y'rself doin' somethin' y' ain't used t'?"

It did Shorty so much good to see Si squelched, that he chuckled aloud and called out:

"Give it to him, old Snuff-Dipper. He's from the Wabash, an' haint no friends. He's bin itchin' a long time for jest such a skinnin' as you're givin' him."

"Who air yo' callin' Snuff-Dipper?" she retorted, turning angrily on Shorty. "What've ye got t' say agin snuff-dippin', any way, y' terbacker-chawin', likker-guzzlin', wall-eyed, splay-footed, knock-kneed oaf? What air yo' greasy hirelings a-comin' down heah fo', t' sass and slander Southern ladies, who air yo' superiors?"

"Give it to him, old Corncob Pipe," yelled Si. "He needs lambastin' worse'n any man in the regiment. But what did you want to see me for?"

"I wanted to see yo' bekase I got a letter to yo' from a friend o' mine, who said yo' wuz gentlemen, an' rayly not Yankees at all. He said that yo' wuz forced into the army agin yo' will"

"Gracious, what a liar that man must be," murmured Shorty to himself.

"An' that yo' rayly had no heart to fight for the nigger, an' that yo'd treat me like a sister."

"A sister," Shorty exploded internally. "Think of a feller's havin' a sister like that. Why, I wouldn't throw her in a soap-grease barrel."

"Who was this friend, Madam?" said Si, and where is his letter?"

"I don't know whether to give it to yo' or not," said she. "Y're not the men at all that he ascribed to me. He said yo' wuz very good-lookin', perlite gentlemen, who couldn't do too much for a lady."

"Sorry we're not as handsome as you expected," said Si; "but mebbe that's because we're in fatigue uniforms. You ought to see my partner there when he's fixed up for parade. He's purtier'n a red wagon then. Let me see the letter. I can tell then whether we're the men or not."

"Kin yo' read," she asked suspiciously.

"O, yes," answered Si laughingly at the thought almost universal in the South, that reading and writing were—like the Gift of Tongues—a special dispensation to a few favored individuals only. "I can read and do lots o' things that common people can't. I'm seventh son of a seventh son, born with a caul on my head at the time o' the full moon. Let me see the letter."

She was not more than half conviuced, but unhooked her dress and took a note from her bosom, which she stuck out toward Si, holding tightly on to one end in the meanwhile. Si read, in Levi Rosenbaum's flourishing, ornate handwriting:

"Corporal Josiah Klegg,
Co. Q, 200th Indiana Volunteers,
in Camp on Duck River."

"That means me," said Si, taking hold of the end of the envelope. "There ain't but one 200th Injianny Volunteers; there's no other Co. Q, and I'm the only Josiah Klegg."

The woman still held on to the other end of the letter.

"It comes," continued Si, "from a man a little under medium size, with black hair and eyes, dresses well, talks fast, and speaks a Dutch brogue."

"That's him," said the woman, relinquishing the letter, and taking a seat under the shade of a young cucumber tree, where she proceeded to fill her pipe, while waiting the reading of the missive.

Si stepped off a little ways, and Shorty looked over his shoulder as he opened the letter and read:

'Dear Boys: This will be handed you, if reaches you at all, by Mrs. Bolster, who has more about her than you think.'

"I don't know about that," muttered Shorty; "the last time I had the pleasure o' meetin' the lady she had 'steen dozen bottles o' head-bust about her."

"She's a Confederate, as far as she goes," Si continued reading, "which is not very far. She don't go but little ways. A jay-bird that did not have any more brains would not build much of a nest. But she is very useful to me, and I want you to get in with her. As soon as you read this I want Si to give her that pair of horn combs I gave him. Do it at once. Sincerely your friend,
"Levi Rosenbaum."

Si knit his brows in perplexity and wonderment over this strange message. He looked at Shorty, but Shorty's face was as blank of explanation as his own. He fumbled around in his blouse pocket, drew forth the combs, and handed them to the woman. Her dull face lighted up visibly. She examined the combs carefully, as if

fitting them to a description, and reaching in her bosom she pulled out another letter and handed it to Si.

When this was opened Si read:

"Dear Boys: Now you will understand the comb business. I wanted to make sure that my letter reached the right men, and the combs were the only things I could think of at the moment. Mrs. B. will prize them, though she will never think of using them, either on herself or one of her shock-headed brats. I want you to play it on her as far as your consciences will allow. Pretend that you are awful sick of this Abolition war, and tired fighting for the nigger, and all that stuff. Make her the happiest woman in Tennessee by giving her all the coffee you can spare. That will fetch her quicker and surer than anything else. Like most Southern women, she is a coffee-drinker first and a rebel afterward, and if some preacher would tell her that heaven is a place where she will get all the Yankee coffee she can drink, she would go to church regularly for the rest of her life. Tell her a lot of news—as much of it true as you can and think best; as much of it otherwise as you can invent. Follow her cautiously when she leaves camp. Don't let her see you do so. You will find that she will lead you to a nest of spies, and the place where all the whisky is furnished to sell in camp. I write you thus freely because I am certain that this will get in your hands. I know that your regiment is out here, because I have been watching it for a week, with reference to its being attacked. It won't be for at least awhile, for there's another hen on. But make up to the old lady as much as your consciences and stomachs will allow you. It will be for the best interests of the service.

"Sincerely your friend,

"Levi Rosenbaum."

"I wonder what game Levi is up to?" Si said, as he

stood with the letter in his hand and looked at the woman. "I'll give her all the coffee I can and be very civil to her, but that's as far as I'll go. The old rebel cat. I'll not lie to her for 40 Levi Rosenbaums."

"Well, I will," said Shorty. "You fix her up with the coffee, and leave the rest to me. I always had a fancy for queer animals, and run off from home once to travel with a menagerie. I'd like to take her up North and start a side-show with her. 'The Queen o' the Raccoon Mountains,' or the 'Champion Snuff-Dipper o' the Sequatchie Valley.' How'd that do for a sign?"

"Well, go ahead," said Si. "But expect no help from me."

"Mr. Klegg, when I want your help in courtin' a lady I'll let you know," said Shorty with dignity. Si went back to the tent to see about getting the coffee, and Shorty approached Mrs. Bolster with an engaging expression on his countenance. She was knocking the ashes out of her pipe.

"Let me fill your pipe up again, Madam, with something very choice," said he, pulling out a plug of bright natural leaf. "Here's some terbacker the like o' which you never see in all your born days. It was raised from seed stole from the private stock of the High-muk-a-muk o' Turkey, brung acrost the ocean in a silver terbacker box for the use o' President Buchanan, and planted in the new o' the moon on a piece o' ground that never before had raised nothin' but roses and sweet-williams. My oldest brother, who is a Senator from Oshkosh, got just one plug of it, which he divided with me."

"O, my! is that true?" she gurgled.

"It's as true as that you are a remarkably fine-lookin' woman," he said with unblushing countenance, as he began whittling off some of the tobacco to fill her pipe.

"I was struck by your appearance as soon as I saw you. I always was very fond of the Southern ladies."

"Sakes alive, air y'?" she asked; "then what air yo'uns down here foutin' we'uns fur?"

"That's a long story, m'm," answered Shorty. "It was a trick o' the Abolition politicians that got us into it. I'm awful sick o' the war (that we haint gone ahead and knocked the heads offen this whole crowd instead o' layin' 'round here in camp for months,)" he added as a mental reservation, "and wisht I was out of it (after we've hung Jeff Davis on a sour-apple tree). Then I might settle down here and marry some nice woman. Your're a widder, I believe you said."

"Yes, I'm a widder," she answered, taking her pipe from her mouth and giving him what she intended for a languishing smile, but which Shorty afterward said reminded him of a sun-crack in a mud fence. "Yes, I'm a widder. Bin so for gwine on six months. Sakes alive, ~~but ye~~ do talk nice. You air the best-lookin' Yankee I've ever seed."

"Nothin' painfully bashful about her," thought Shorty. "But I must be careful not to let her get n~~e~~ near a Justice of the Peace. She'd marry me before I could ketch my breath. Madam," he continued aloud.

"Yo' may call me Sally," she said, with another cavernous smile.

"Well, Sophrony, let me present you with half o' this plug o' famous terbacker." He drew his jackknife and sliced the plug in two. "Take it, with my warmest respects. Here comes my partner with some coffee I've sent him for, and which I want you to have. It is not as much as I'd like to give you, but it's all that I have. Some other day you shall have much more."

"Laws sakes," she bubbled, as the fragrant odor of the coffee reached her nose, and she hefted the package. "Yo' air jest the nicest man I ever did see in all my born days. I didn't s'pose thar wuz so nice a man, or sich a good-lookin' one, in the hull Yankee army, or in the Confederit either, fur that matter. But, then, yo' aint no real blue-bellied Yankee."

"No, indeed, Sally. I never saw New England in all my life, nor did any o' my people. They wuz from Virginny (about 500 miles, as near as I kin calculate)," he added to himself, as a mental poultice.

"Say, Mister, why don't yo' leave the Yankee army?"

"Can't," said Shorty, despairingly. "If I try to git back home the Provo's'll ketch me. If I go the other way the rebel's ketch me. I'm betwixt the devil and the deep sea."

She sat and smoked for several minutes in semblance of deep thought, and spat with careful aim at one after another of the prominent weeds around. Then she said:

"If yo' want t' splice with me I kin take keer o' yo'. I've helped run off several o' the boys who wuz sick o' this Abolition war. Thar's two o' them now with Bill Phillips's gang makin' it hot for the Yankee trains and camps. They're makin' more'n they ever did soljerin', an' havin' a much better time, for they take whatever they want, no matter who it belongs to. D'yo' know Groundhog, a teamster? He's in cahoots with us."

"Oh!" said Shorty to himself. "Here's another lay altogether. Guess it's my duty to work it for all that it's worth."

"Is it a bargain?" she said suddenly, stretching out her long, skinny hand.

"Sophrony," said Shorty, taking her hand, "this is so sudden. I had never thought o' marryin'—at least till this cruel war is over. I don't know what kind of a

husband I'd make. I don't know whether I could fill the place o' your late husband. I"—

"Yo're not gwine t' sneak out," she said, with a fierce flash in her gray eyes. "If yo' do I'll have yo' pizenen."

"Now, who's talkin' about backin' out?" said Shorty in a fever of placation, for he was afraid that some of the other boys would overhear the conversation. "Don't talk so loud. Come, let's walk on toward your home. We kin talk on the way."

The proposition appeared reasonable. She took the bridle of her horse over her arm, and together they walked out through the guard-line. The sentries gave Shorty a deep, knowing wink as he passed. He went the more willingly, as he was anxious to find out more about the woman, and the operations of the gang with which she was connected. She had already said enough to explain several mysterious things of recent occurrence. Night came down and as her ungainliness was not thrust upon him as it was in the broad glare of day, he felt less difficulty in professing a deep attachment for her. He even took her hand. On her part she grew more open and communicative at every step, and Shorty had no difficulty in understanding that there was gathered around her a gang that was practicing about everything detrimental to the army. They were by turns spies, robbers, murderers, whisky smugglers, horse-thieves, and anything else that promised a benefit to themselves. Ostensibly they were rebels, but this did not prevent their preying upon the rebels when occasion offered. Some were deserters from the rebel army, some were evading the conscript laws, two or three were deserters from our army.

Shorty and the woman had reached a point nearly a half-mile outside of the guard-line when he stopped and said:

"I can't go no farther now. I must go back."

"Why must yo' go back?" she demanded, with a sudden angry suspicion. "I thought yo' wuz gwine right along with me."

"Why, no. I never thought o' that. I must go back and get my things before I go with you," said Shorty, as the readiest way of putting her off.



"SHE WHIPPED OUT A LONG KNIFE."

"Plague take y'r things," she said. "Let 'em go. Yo' kin git plenty more jest as good from the next Yankee camp. Yo' slip back some night with the boys an' git yo'r own things, if y're so dratted stuck on 'em. Come along now."

She took hold of his wrist with a grip like iron. Shorty had no idea that a woman could have such strength.

"I want to go back and git my partner," said Shorty. "Me and him 've bin together all the time we've bin in

the army. He'll go along with me, I'm sure. Me and him thinks alike on everything, and what one starts the other jines in. I want to go back to him an' git him."

"I don't like that partner o' your'n. I don't want him. I'll be a better partner t' yo' than ever he was. Yo' mustn't think more o' him than yo' do o' me."

"Look here, Sophrony," said Shorty desperately, "I cannot an' I will not go with you to-night. I'm expectin' important letters from home to-morrow, and I must go back an' git 'em. I've a thousand things to do before I go away. Have some sense. This thing's bin sprung on me so suddenly that it ketches me unawares."

With the quickness of a flash she whipped out a long knife from somewhere, and raised it, and then hesitated a second.

"I believe yo're foolin' me, and if I wuz shore I'd stick yo'. But I'm gwine t' give yo' a chance. Yo' kin go back now, an' I'll come for yo' ter-morrer. If you go back on me hit'll be a mouty sorry day for yo'. Mind that now."

Shorty gallantly helped her mount, and then hurried back to camp.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SI AND SHORTY GO OUT TO VISIT MRS. BOLSTER.

Shorty sauntered thoughtfully back to the tent, and on the way decided to tell Si the whole occurrence, not even omitting the deceit practiced.

He had to admit to himself that he was unaccountably shaken up by the affair.

Si was so deeply interested in the revelations that he forgot to blame Shorty's double-dealing.

"Never had my nerve so strained before," Shorty frankly admitted. "At their best, women are curiouser than transmogrified hullaloos, and when a real cute one sets out to hornswoggle a man he might as well lay down and give right up, for he haint no earthly show. She gits away with him every time, and one to spare. That there woman 's got the devil in her bigger'n a sheep, and she come nigher makin' putty o' your Uncle Ephraim than I ever dreamed of before. It makes me shivery to think about it."

"I don't care if she's more devils in her than the Gadarene swine, she must be stopped at once," said Si, his patriotic zeal flaming up. "She's doin more mischief than a whole regiment o' rebels, and must be bust-ed immediately. We've got to stop her."

"But just how are we goin' to stop her?" Shorty asked. There was a weak unreadiness in Shorty's tones that made Si look at him in surprise. Never before, in any emergency, had there been the slightest shade of such a thing in his bold, self-reliant partner's voice.

"I'd rather tackle any two men there are in the South-

ern Confederacy than that woman," said Shorty. "I believe she put a spell on me."

"Le's go up and talk to Capt. McGillicuddy about it," said Si. Ordinarily, this was the last thing that either of them would have thought of doing. Their usual disposition was to go ahead and settle the problem before them in their own way, and report about it afterward. But Shorty was clearly demoralized.

Capt. McGillicuddy listened very gravely to their story.

"Evidently that old hen has a nest of bad, dangerous men, which has to be broken up," he said. "We can get the whole raft if we go about it in the right way, but we've got to be mighty smart in dealing with them, or they'll fly the coop, and leave the laugh on us. You say she's coming back to-morrow?"

"Yes," said Shorty, with a perceptible shiver.

"Well, I want you to fall right in with all her plans—both of you. Pretend to be anxious to desert, or anything else that she may propose. Go back home with her. I shall watch you carefully, but without seeming to, and follow you with a squad big enough to take care of anything that may be out there. Go back to your tent now, and think it all over, and arrange some signal to let me know when you want me to jump the outfit."

The boys went back to their tent, and spent an hour in anxious consideration of their plans. Si saw the opportunity to render a great service, and was eager to perform it, but he firmly refused to tell any lies to the woman or those around her. He would not say that he was tired of the service and wanted to desert; he would not pretend liking for the Southern Confederacy or the rebels, nor hatred to his own people. He would do nothing but go along, share all the dangers with Shorty, and be ready at the moment to co-operate in breaking up the gang.

"Some folks's so durned straight that they lean over backwards," said Shorty impatiently. "What in thunder does it amount to what you tell these ornery gallinippers? They'll lie to you as fast as a hoss kin trot. There's no devilment they won't do, and there kin be nothin' wrong in anything you kin do and say to them."

"Everybody settles some things for himself," said the unchangeable Si. "I believe them folks are as bad as they kin be made. I believe every one o' 'em ought to be killed, and if it wuz orders to kill 'em I'd kill without turnin' a hair. But I jest simply won't lie to nobody, I don't care who he is. I'll stand by you until the last drop; you kin tell 'em what you please, but I won't tell 'em nothin', except that they're a pizen gang, that ought t've bin roastin' in brimstone 'long ago."

"But," expostulated Shorty, "if you only go along with me you're actin' a lie. If you go out o' camp with me you'll pretend to be desertin' and j'inin' in with 'em. Seems to me that's jest as bad as tellin' a lie straight out."

"Well," said the immovable Si, "I draw the line there. I'll go along with you, and they kin think what they like. But if I say anything to 'em, they'll git it mighty straight."

"Well, I don't know but, after all, we kin better arrange it that way," said Shorty, after he had thought it over in silence for some time. "I'm sure that if you'd talk you'd give us dead away. That clumsy basswood tongue o' yourn hain't any suppleness, and you'd be sure to blurt out something that 'd jest ruin us. An idee occurs to ne. You jest go along, look sour and say nothin'. I'll tell 'em you ketched cold the other night and lost your speech. It'll give me a turn o' extra dooty talkin' for two, but I guess I kin do it."

"All right," agreed Si. "Let it go that way."

"Now, look here, Si," said Shorty, in a low, mysterious

tone, "I'm goin' to tell you somethin' that I hadn't intended to. I'm scared to death lest that old hag'll git the drop on me some way and marry me right out of hand. I tell you, she jest frightens the life out o' me. That worries me more'n all the rest put together. I expect I ought to 'v' told you so at the very first."

"Nonsense," said Si contemptuously. "The idee o' you're being afeared o' such a thing."

"It's all very well for you to snort and laugh, Si Klegg," persisted Shorty. "You don't know her. I sneered at her, too, at first, but when I was left alone with her she seemed to mesmerize me. I found myself talkin' about marryin' her before I knowed it, and the next thing I was on the p'int o' actually marrying her. I believe that if she'd got me to walk a half-mile further with her she'd a run me up agin a Justice o' the Peace and married me in spite of all that I could do. I'd much ruther have my head blowed off than married to that old cata-mount."

"Bah, you can't marry folks unless both are willin'," insisted Si. "A man can't have a marriage rung in on him willy-nilly."

"There's just where you're shootin' off your mouth without any sense. You don't know what you're talkin' about. Men are lassoed every day and married to women that they'd run away from like a dog from a porcupine, if they could. You jest look around among the married folks you know, and see how many there are that wouldn't have married one another if they'd bin in their senses."

"Well, I don't think o' many," said Si, whose remembrances were that the people in Posey County seemed generally well-mated.

"Well, there mayn't be many, but there's some, and I don't propose to be one of 'em. There's some spell or

witchcraft about it. I've read in books about things that gave a woman power to marry any man she wanted to, and he couldn't help himself. That woman's got something o' that kind, and she's set her eye on me. I'm goin' to meet her, and I want to help break up her gang, but I'd a great deal rather tackle old Bragg and his entire army. I want you to stay right by me every minnit, and keep your eye on me, when she's near me."

"All right," said Si sleepily, as he crawled into bed.

The next morning, as they were discussing the question of signals, they happened to pass the Sutler's, and Si caught a glimpse of packages of fire-crackers, which the regimental purveyor had, for some inscrutable reason, thought he might sell. An idea occurred to Si, and he bought a couple of packages, and stowed them away in his blouse pocket and told the Captain that their firing would be the signal, unless a musket-shot should come first.

It was yet early in the forenoon as they walked on the less-frequented side of the camp. Shorty gave a start, and gasped:

"Jewhilikins, there she is already."

Si looked, and saw Mrs. Bolster striding toward them. Shorty hung back instinctively for an instant, and then braced up and bade her good morning.

She grunted an acknowledgment, and said rather imperiously:

"Y're a-gwine, air yo'?"

"Certainly," answered Shorty.

"And yo'?" she inquired, looking at Si.

"He's a goin' too," answered Shorty. "Mustn't expect him to talk. He's short on tongue this mornin'. Ketched a bad cold night before last. Settled on his word-mill. Unjinted his clapper. Can't speak a word.

Doctor says it will last several days. Not a great affliction. Couldn't 've lost anything o' less account."

"Must've bin an orful cold," said she, taking her pipe from her mouth and eyeing Si suspiciously. "Never knowed a cold to shut off any one's gab afore. Seems t' me that hit makes people talk more. But these Yankees air different. Whar air yer things?" Did yo' bring plenty o' coffee?"

"We've got 'em hid down here in the brush," said Shorty. "We'll git 'em when we're ready to start."

"We're ready now," she answered. "Come along."

"But we haint no passes," objected Shorty. "We must go to the Captain and git passes."

"Yo' won't need no passes," she said impatiently. "Foller me."

Shorty had expected to make the pretext about the passes serve for informing Capt. McGillicuddy of the presence of the woman in the camp. He looked quickly around and saw the Captain sauntering carelessly at a little distance, so that any notification was unnecessary. He turned and followed Mrs. Bolster's long strides, with Si bringing up the rear.

They went to the clump of brush where they had hidden their haversacks and guns. Mrs. Bolster eagerly examined the precious package of coffee.

"I'll take keer o' this myself," she said, slowing it away about her lanky person. "I can't afford to take no resks as to hit."

Si and Shorty had thought themselves very familiar with the campground, but they were astonished to find themselves led outside the line without passing under the eye of a single guard. Si looked at Shorty in amazement, and Shorty remarked:

"Well, I'll be durned."

The woman noticed and understood. "Yo' Yanka."

she said scornfully, "think yourselves moughty smart with all your book-larnin,' and yo'uns put on heaps o' airs over po' folks what haint no eddication; but what you don't know about Tennessee woods would make a bigger book than ever was printed."

"I believe you," said Shorty fervently. His superstition in regard to her was rapidly augmenting to that point where he believed her capable of anything. He was alarmed about Capt. McGillicuddy's being able to follow their mysterious movements. But they soon came to the road, and looking back from the top of a hill, Shorty's heart lightened as he saw a squad moving out which he was confident was led by Capt. McGillicuddy.

But little had been said so far. At a turn of the road they came upon a gray-bearded man, wearing a battered silk hat and spectacles, whom Mrs. Bolster greeted as "Squire."

The word seemed to send all the blood from Shorty's face, and he looked appealingly to Si as if the crisis had come.

The newcomer looked them over sharply and inquired: "Who are these men, Mrs. Bolster?"

"They'uns's all right. They'uns's had enough o' Abolition doin's, and hev come over whar they'uns allers rayly belonged. This one is a partickler friend o' mine," and she leered at Shorty in a way that made his blood run cold.

"Hain't yo' time t' stop a minute, 'Squire?" she asked appealingly, as the newcomer turned his horse's head to renew his journey

"Not now; not now," answered the 'Squire, digging his heels into his steed's side. "I want to talk t' yo' and these 'ere men 'bout what's gwine on in the Lincoln camps, but I must hurry on now to meet Capt. Solomon

at the Winding Blades." I'll come over to your house this evening," he called back.

"Don't fail, 'Squire," she answered, "fur I've got a little job for yo', an' I want hit partickerly done this very evenin'. Hit can't wait."



SHE PLAYFULLY PINCHED HIS ARM

"I'll be there without fail," he assured her.

"Captin Solomon's the man what sent the letter to you," she explained, which somewhat raised Shorty's depressed heart, for he began to have hopes that Rosen-

baum might rescue him if Capt. McGillicuddy should be behind time.

As they jogged onward farther from camp Mrs. Bolster's saturnine earnestness began to be succeeded by what were intended to be demonstrations of playful affection for her future husband, whom she now began to regard as securely hers. She would draw Shorty into the path a little ahead of Si, and walk alongside of him, pinching his arm and jabbering incoherent words which were meant for terms of endearment. When the narrowness of the road made them walk in single file she would come up from time to time alongside with cuffs intended for playful love-taps.

At each of these Shorty would cast such a look of wretchedness at Si that the latter had difficulty in preserving his steadfast silence and rigidity of countenance.

But the woman's chief affection seemed to be called forth by the package of coffee. She would stop in the midst of any demonstration to pull out the bag containing the fragrant berry, and lovingly inhale its odor.

It was long past noon when she announced: "Thar's my house right ahead." She followed this up with a ringing whoopee, which made the tumbledown cabin suddenly swarm with animation. A legion of loud-mouthed dogs charged down toward the road. Children of various ages, but of no variety in their rags and unkempt wildness, followed the dogs, or perched upon the fence-corners and stumps, and three or four shambling, evil-faced mountaineers lunged forward, guns in hand, with eyes fiercer than the dogs, as they looked over the two armed soldiers.

"They'uns is all right, boys," exclaimed the woman. "They'uns's plum sick o' doggin' hit for Abe Lincoln an' quit."

"Let 'em gin up thar guns, then," said the foremost

man, who had but one eye, reaching for Shorty's musket. "I'll take this one. I've been longin' for a good Yankee gun for a plum month to reach them Yankee pickets on Duck River."

Though Shorty and Si had schooled themselves in the part they were to play, the repugnant thought of giving up their arms to the rebels threatened to upset everything. Instinctively they threw up their guns to knock over the impudent guerrillas. The woman strode in between them and the others, and caught hold of their muskets.

"Don't be fools. Let 'em have your guns," she said, and she caught Si's with such quick unexpectedness that she wrenched it from his grasp and flung it to the man who wanted Shorty's. She threw one arm around Shorty's neck, with a hug so muscular that his breath failed, and she wrenched his gun away. She kept this in her hand, however.

"Now, I want these 'ere men treated right," she announced to the others, "and I'm agwine to have 'em treated right, or I'll bust somebody's skillet. They'uns is my takings, and I'm agwine to have all the say 'bout 'em. I've never interfered with any Yankees any o' yo'uns have brung in. Yo've done with them as you pleased, an' I'm agwine to do with these jest as I please, and yo'uns that don't like hit kin jest lump hit, that's all.

"Sal Bolster, I want yo' to take yo'r arm from around that Yank's neck," said the man who had tried to take Shorty's gun. "I won't 'low yo' to put yo'r arm 'round another man's neck as long's I'm alive to stop it."

"Ye won't, Jeff Hackberry," she sneered. "Jealous, air ye? You've got no bizniss o' bein'. Done tole ye 'long ago I'd never marry yo', so long as I could find a man who has two good eyes and a 'spectable character. I've

done found him. Here he is, and 'Squire Corson 'll splice us to-night."

How much of each of the emotions of jealousy, disappointment, hurt vanity, and rebel antagonism went into



"TAKE YOUR ARM FROM AROUND THAT YANK'S NECK."

the howl that Mr. Jeff Hackberry set up at this announcement will never be known. He made a rush with clenched fists at Shorty.

A better description could be given of the operations of the center of a tornado than of the events of the next few

minutes. Shorty and Hackberry grappled fiercely. Mrs. Bolster mixed in to stop the fight and save Shorty. Si and the other three rebels flung themselves into the whirlpool of strikes, kicks, and grapples. The delighted children came rushing in, and eagerly joined the fray, striking with charming impartiality at every opportunity to get a lick in anywhere on anybody; and finally the legion of dogs, to whom such scenes seemed familiar and gladsome, rushed in with an ear-splitting clamor, and jumped and bit at the arms and legs that went flying around.

This was too violent to last long. Everybody and everything had to stop from sheer exhaustion. But when the stop came Mrs. Bolster was sitting on the prostrate form of Jeff Hackberry. The others were disentangling themselves from one another, the children and the dogs, and apparently trying to get themselves into relation with the points of the compass and understand what had been happening.

"Have yo' had enough, Jeff Hackberry?" inquired Mrs. Bolster, "or will yo' obleege me to gouge yer other eye out afore yo' come to yer senses?"

"Le' me up, Sally," pleaded the man, "an' then we kin talk this thing over."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

BREAKING UP A BAD REBEL NEST.

When physical exhaustion called a halt in the fracas, Mrs. Bolster was seated on Jeff Hackberry's breast, with her sinewy hands clutching his long hair, and her thumb, with a cruel, long nail, pressing the ball of his one good eye. Shorty was holding down one of the guerrillas who had tried to climb on his back when he was grappling with Hackberry. Si had knocked one guerrilla senseless with his gun-barrel, and now came to a breathless standstill in a struggle with another for the possession of his gun. The children and dogs had broken up into several smaller storm-centers, in each of which a vicious fight was going on. In some it was dog and dog; in some child and child, and in others dogs and children mixed.

Then they all halted to observe the outcome of the discussion between Mrs. Bolster and Jeff Hackberry.

"Holler 'nuff, Jeff, or out goes yer last light," commanded Mrs. Bolster, emphasizing her words by rising a little, and then settling down on Jeff's breast with a force that drove near every spoonful of breath out of him.

"Sal, le' me up," he begged in gasps.

"Mrs. Bolster," she reminded him, with another jounce upon his chest.

"Mrs. Bolster, le' me up. I'd 'a' got away with that 'ere Yank ef ye' hedn't tripped me with them long legs o' your'n."

"I'm right smart on the trip, aint I," she grinned. "I never seed a man yit that I couldn't throw in any sort of a rastle."

"Le' me up, Mrs. Bolster, an' le's begin over agin, an' yo' keep out," begged Hackberry.

"Not much I won't. I aint that kind of a chicken," she asserted with another jounce. "When I down a man I down him fer good, an' he never gits up agin 'till he caves entirely. If I let yo' up, will yo' swar to quile down peaceable as a lamb, an' make the rest do the same?"

"Never," asserted Hackberry. "I'm ergwine to have it out with that Yank."

"No you haint," she replied with a still more emphatic jounce that made Hackberry use all the breath left him to groan.

"I'll quile," he said, with his next instalment of atmosphere.

Will yo' agree t' let me marry this Yank, an' t' give me away as my oldest friend, nearest o' kin, an' best man?" she inquired, rising sufficiently to let him take in a full breath and give a free, unforced answer.

"Nary a time," he shrieked. "I'll die fust, afore I'll 'low yo' t' marry ary other man but me."

"Then you'll lose yer blinker, yo' pigheaded, likker-guzzlin,' ornery, no-account sand-hill crane," she said, viciously coming down on his chest with her full weight and sticking the point of her nail against his eye. "I wouldn't marry yo' if ye wuz the last nubbin in the Lord A'mighty's crib, and thar'd never be another crap o' men. Yo'll never git no chance to make me yer slave, and beat me and starve me t' death as yo' did Nance Brill. I ain't gwine t' fool with yer parvarsity nary a minnit longer. Say this instant whether yo'll do as I say with a free will and good heart, or out goes yer peeper."

"I promise," groaned Jeff.

"Yo' sw'ar hit?" she demanded.

"Yes, I sw'ar hit," answered Jeff

Mrs. Bolster rose, and confirmed the contract by giving him a kick in the side with her heavy brogan.

"That's jest a lovetap," she remarked, "t' let yo' know t' le' me alone hereafter. Now, le's straighten things around here fer a pleasant time."

She initiated her proposed era of good feeling by a sounding kick in the ribs of the most obstreperous of the dogs, and a slap on the face of a 12-year-old girl, who was the



"JEFF SAT UP AND RUBBED HIMSELF."

noisiest and most pugnacious of the lot. Each of these set up a howl, but there was a general acquiescence in her assertion of authority.

Jeff Hackberry sat up, scratched and rubbed himself, seemed to be trying to once more get a full supply of air in his lungs, and turned a one-eyed glare on his surroundings. The guerrilla whom Si had knocked down began to show signs of returning consciousness, but no

one paid any attention to him. One of the other two pulled out a piece of tobacco, split it in two, put the bigger half in his own mouth and handed the remainder to his partner. Both began chewing meditatively and looking with vacant eyes for the next act in the drama. Shorty regained his gun, and he and Si looked inquiringly at one another and the mistress of the ranch.

"Come on up t' the house," she said, starting in that direction. The rest followed, with Si and Shorty in the lead.

The boys gazed around them with strong curiosity. The interior was like that of the other log cabins they had seen—a rough puncheon floor for the single room, a fireplace as big as a barn door, built of rough stones, with a hearth of undressed flat stones, upon which sat a few clumsy cooking utensils of heavy cast-iron, three-legged stools for chairs, a table of rough whip-sawed boards held together by wooden pins. In two of the corners were beds made of a layer of poles resting upon a stick supported at one end upon a log in the wall and at the other end a forked stick driven between the puncheons into the ground below. Upon this was a pile of beech leaves doing duty as a mattress. The bed-clothes were a mass of ragged fabrics, sheepskins, etc., used in the daytime for saddle-blankets and at night upon the bed. There had been added to them, however, looking particularly good and rich in contrast with their squalor, several blankets with "U. S." marked upon them. Around the room were canteens, shoes, and other soldier belongings.

"Have they killed and robbed the men to whom these belonged, or merely traded whisky for them?" was the thought that instantly flashed through Si's and Shorty's minds. The answer seemed to be favorable to murder and robbery. "Set down an' make yourselves at home.

I'll git yo' out suthin' t' wet yer whistles," said Mrs. Bolster, wreathing as much graciousness as she could into her weathered-wood countenance. She apparently kicked at the same instant a stool toward them with her left foot, and a dog out of the way with her right, a performance that excited Shorty's admiration.

"When I see a woman kick in different directions with both feet at the same time, I understood how dangerous her trip would be in a rastle," he said afterward.

Si and Shorty shoved two of the stools so that they could sit with their backs to the wall, still holding their guns.

The guerrillas came filing in, with an expectant look on their faces. Even Jeff Hackberry looked more thirstily longing than wrathful. The man who had fallen under Si's gunbarrel had gotten able to walk, was rubbing his head and moaning with the design of attracting attention and sympathy.

Mrs. Bolster produced a key from her pocket. The others understood what this meant. They lifted aside some sacks of meal and shelled corn, and revealed a puncheon which had been cut in two, and the short piece was garnished by rude iron hinges and hasp, all probably taken from some burned barn. The hasp was locked into the staple by one of the heavy padlocks customary on the plantations, and this Mrs. Bolster proceeded to open with her key. When the puncheon was turned up it revealed a pit beneath, from which she lifted a large jug of whisky. She poured some out in a tin cup and handed it to Shorty.

"Take a big swig," she said; "hit's mouty good stuff—ole Jeff Thompson's brewin' from yaller corn raised on rich bottom land."

Si trembled as he saw his partner take the cup. Shorty

smelled it appreciatively. "That is good stuff," he said. "Roses aint nowhere alongside."

He put the cup to his lips and took a sip.

"Tastes as good as it smells," he said, heartily, while the mouths of the guerrillas were watering. He put the cup again to his lips, as if to take a deep draft. Then came a short cough and a tremendous sputter, followed by more painful coughing and strangling.

"Jest my infernal luck," gasped Shorty. "I would talk, an' I got some down the wrong way. "Lord, it's burnin' my lights out. Gi' me a drink o' water, somebody."

One of the children handed him a gourdful of water, while he continued to cough and sputter and blame himself for talking when he was drinking.

The woman handed the cup to Si, who feared that the liquor might be poisoned or drugged. He made a pretense of drinking, and then handed the cup back, making motions that his throat was so sore that he could not drink much. Mrs. Bolster looked at him suspiciously, but the clamor of the guerrillas distracted her attention, and she turned to supply them.

"No, Jeff Hackberry," she said firmly, "yo' can't have more'n two fingers. I know yo' of old, an' jest how much yo' orter tote. Two fingers'll make yo' comfortable an' sociable; three'll raise the devil in yo', an' four'll make yo' dancin' drunk, when yo'll have t' be held down. Yo'll have jest two fingers, an' not a drap more."

"Jest another finger, Sally. Remember, yo've bin orf! rough on me, an' I need more. I'll promise t' be good," pleaded Hackberry.

"No, not a drap more'n two fingers now. If yo' behave yo'self I'll give yo' another two fingers by-an'-by."

"Hackberry swallowed his portion at a thirsty gulp and sat down on the door-sill to let it do its invigorating work. The other two guerrillas were given each two

fingers, and the man whom Si knocked down had his moanings rewarded by three fingers and a liberal application in addition to the wound on his head, which he declared was much relieved by it.

"Set your guns up agin the wall an' ack nacherul," commanded Mrs. Bolster. "Nobody's a-gwine to hurt yo'. The 'Squire'll be here soon, we'll git spliced, an' have a good time all around."

The noisy barking of the dogs announced the approach of someone.

"Lord, I hope that's 'Squire Corson," said Mrs. Bolster, running eagerly to the door. "If hit's him, we kin go right ahead with the weddin'."

"If that's the 'Squire," said Shorty, in a low whisper, without turning his head, "we'll grab our guns and fight to the death. We may clean out this gang."

Si's attention had been in the meanwhile attracted to some boxes concealed under the beds, and his curiosity was aroused as to what such unusual things in a cabin might contain.

"No; hit's Capt. Sol. Simmons," said she in a tone of disappointment mixed with active displeasure. "Now, he'll be cavortin' and tearin' around, and wantin' t' kill somebody. I wish he wuz whar hit's a good deal hotter."

She came over to where the boys were sitting, and said in a low tone:

"This man's allers makin' trouble, an' he's bad from his boots up. Keep a stiff upper lip, both on yo', an' we'll try t' manage him. Don't weaken. Hit'll do no good. He'll be wuss'n ever then."

Si and Shorty instinctively felt for the revolvers in their pockets.

The newcomer tied his horse to a sapling and strode into the house. The guerrillas seemed rather more fearful than otherwise to see him, but met him with manners

that were ranged from respectful by Jeff Hackberry to absolute servility by the others. He was a burly, black-bearded man, wearing a fairly-good uniform of a rebel Captain. His face showed that he was a bully, and a cruel one.

He acknowledged in an overbearing way the greetings of the others, and called out imperiously:

"Sal, gi' me a stiff dram o' yer best at wunst. My throat's drier'n a lime-kiln. Bin ridin' all mornin'."

"Folks wantin' likker don't say must t' me, but will yo', an' please," she answered sulkily.

"Must,' 'please,' yo' hag," he said savagely. "Talk that a-way to me. I'll 'please' yo'. I've killed two Yankees this mornin', an' I'm not in the humor to fool around with an old pennyroyal huzzy like yo'. Gi' me some whisky at wunst, or I'll baste yo'."

If ever Mrs. Bolster had been favorably disposed to him, she could not endure to have him treat her this way before Shorty. She would assert herself before him if ever.

She put her arms akimbo and retorted vigorously:

"Nary drap o' likker yo'll git from me, Sol. Simmons. Go and git yer likker whar y're welcome. Y're not welcome here. I don't keer if yo' have killed two Yankees or 20 Yankees. Y're allers talkin' about killin' Yankees, but nobody never sees none that y've killed. I'm a better Confederit than yo' ever dared be. I'm doin' more for the Southern Confederisy. Y're allers a-blowin' while I'm allers a-doin'. Everybody knows that. Talk about the two Yankees y've killed, an' which nobody's seed, here I've brung two Yankees right outen their camps, an' have 'em to show. More'n that, they're gwine t' jine we'uns."

She indicated the two boys with a wave of her hand. Simmons seemed to see them for the first time.

"Yankees here, an' yo' haint killed 'em," he yelled. He put his hand to his revolver and stepped forward. The two boys jumped up and snatched their guns, but before another move could be made Mrs. Bolster's un-failing trip brought Simmons heavily to the floor, with his revolver half out the holster. In an instant she sat down heavily upon him, and laid her brawny hand upon his pistol. The dogs and children gathered around in joyous expectation of a renewal of general hostilities. But the dogs broke away at the scent or sight of someone approaching.

"Mebbe that's 'Squire Corson," said Mrs. Bolster with a renewed flush of pleasant anticipation.

Instead, a rather good-looking young rebel officer wearing a Major's silver stars dismounted from his horse and, followed by two men, entered the cabin.

"Hello, Simmons," said the Major in a tone of strong rebuke as soon as he entered. "What in the world are you doing here? Is this the way you carry out the General's orders? You're at your old tricks again. You were sent out here early this morning, to capture or drive away that Yankee picket at Raccoon Ford, so as to let Capt. Gillen come through with his pack-mules. I expected to meet him here and go on with him. Your men have been waiting at the crossroads for you since daylight, while you've been loitering around the rear. I ought to have you shot, and you would be if I reported this to the General. You skulking whelp, you ought to be shot. But I'll give you one more chance. It may not be too late yet. Break for your place as fast as you can, and take these whelps with you. I'll wait here till sundown for you. If you don't report back to me by that time you'd better make your will. Jump, now."

Mrs. Bolster had let go of Simmons as this exordium proceeded, or she felt that he was in good hands.

As they disappeared the Major turned to Mrs. Bolster and inquired:

"Did Capt. Gillen get through with that quinine and guncaps?"

"They're thar," she said, pointing to the boxes under the beds.

"Very good. I've brought some men to take them away. We need them very badly. Who are these men?"

Mrs. Bolster told her story about how they were tired of the Abolition war, and had yielded to her persuasions to join the Southern army.

The Major looked them over sharply, and began a close cross-questioning as to where they were born, what regiment they belonged to, how long they had been in the service, what battles they had been engaged in and on what part of the field, where their regiment now was, its brigade, division and corps, commanders, etc., etc.

As Shorty did not see any present occasion for lying, he had no trouble in telling a convincing, straightforward story. Si successfully worked the loss-of-voice racket, and left the burden of conversation to his partner.

The Major seemed satisfied, and said at the conclusion:

"Very good. I'll take you back with me when I return, and place you in a good regiment."

This was a new and startling prospect, which was almost too much for Shorty's self-control. For a minute he had wild thoughts of assassinating the Major then and there, and making a run for life. But he decided to wait a little longer and see what would develop.

If Mrs. Bolster's hue had permitted she would have turned pale at this threatened loss of a husband and upsetting of all her plans. She merely gulped down a lump in her throat and seemed to be thinking.

She became very attentive to the Major, and brought

for his edification a private bottle of fine old whisky. She set about preparing something for them to eat.

Again the dogs barked, and in walked a man dressed in the fatigue uniform of a Union soldier with the chevrons of a Sergeant. The boys gave a start of surprise, and a greater one when they saw on his cap:

A

200 Ind. Vols.

Si would have sprung up to greet him, but Shorty laid a restraining hand, and whispered:

"He don't belong to our regiment."

A second glance satisfied Si of this. While it is hardly possible for a man to know every other man in his regiment, yet in a little while there comes something which enables him to know whether any man he meets does or does not belong to his regiment.

The Major and Mrs. Bolster instantly recognized the newcomer.

"Awful glad to see you, Tuggers," said the Major, rising and shaking his hand. "Did you get through without any trouble?"

"Not a bit o' trouble, thanks to you and Mrs. Bolster here. She got me this uniform and this cap," said Tuggers, taking off the latter article and scanning the lettering. "Rather more brass than I'm in the habit of carrying on top of my head, no matter how much I have in my face. I got your note giving me the positions of the Yankee regiments, for which I suppose we must also thank Mrs. Bolster. I found them all correct. As the 200th Ind. was the farthest out, I had no difficulty getting through the rest of them by saying that I was on my way to my regiment. Of course, I didn't come through the camp of the 200th Ind., but modestly sought a by-road which Mrs. Bolster had put me onto. I've got a lot

of important letters from the mail in Nashville, among which are some letters for the General, which I am told are highly important. I'm mighty glad to be able to place them in your hands, and relieve myself of the responsibility. Here they are. Thanks, I don't care if I do, since you press me so hard," said he, without change of voice, as he handed over the letters and picked up the bottle and tin cup.

"Excuse me, Tuggers, for not asking you before," said the Major. "I was so interested in you and your letters I forgot for the moment that you might be thirsty. Help yourself."

"I didn't forget it," said Tuggers, pouring out a liberal dram. "Here's to our deserving selves and our glorious Cause."

A shy girl of about eight had responded to Si's persistent encouragement, and sidled up to him, examining his buttons and accouterments. Si gave her some buttons he had in his pocket, and showed her his knife and other trinkets in his pockets. The other children began to gather around, much interested in the elaborate dumb show he was making of his inability to speak.

Again the dogs barked. Mrs. Bolster ran to the door. "Hit's 'Squire Corson," she exclaimed joyously, and hustled around to make extra preparations for his entertainment.

The 'Squire entered, mopping his face with his bandana, and moving with the deliberation and dignity consistent with his official position.

He looked at the boys with a severe, judicial eye, and gave the ominous little cough with which he was wont to precede sentences. But he recognized the Major and Tuggers, and immediately his attention was centered in them. They were connected with Army Headquarters;

they were repositories of news which he could spread among his constituents. He greeted them effusively, and was only too glad to accept their invitation to sit down and drink. But he suggested, with official prudence, that they go out in front and sit under a tree, where they could converse more at liberty.

"Afore you go out, 'Squire," said Mrs. Bolster, with an attempt at coyness, "I want yo' t' do a little job fer me."

Shorty's hair tried to stand on end.

"Jest wait a little, my good woman," said the 'Squire patronizingly. "I want to talk to these gentlemen first; I kin 'tend to your matter any time."

They lighted their pipes, and talked and talked, while Mrs. Bolster fidgeted around in growing anxiety. Finally, as the sun was going down, she could stand it no longer, and approached the group.

"'Squire," she said, "I'm orferly anxious to have a little job o' mine done. 'Twon't take yo' five minnits. Please 'tend to it right away."

"What is it she wants?" inquired the Major.

"I think she wants me to marry her to a Yankee deserter in there. She whispered suthin' o' that kind to me awhile ago."

"That reminds me," said the Major; "I want you to swear those two men into the service of the Southern Confederacy. You might as well do it now, if you please, for I want to take them back with me and put them into a regiment."

"That won't give much of a honeymoon to Mrs. Bolster," grinned the 'Squire.

"Well, we've all got to make sacrifices for the Cause," said the Major; "her honeymoon'll be the sweeter for being postponed. I've had to postpone mine."

"Well, bring the men out," said the 'Squire, pouring himself out another drink.

Si and Shorty had moved to the front door when Mrs. Bolster went out, and could hear the whole conversation. They looked at one another. Their faces were whiter than they had ever been on the field of battle.

"Take the oath of allegiance to the Southern Confederacy? Die right here a hundred times," surged through both their hearts.

Si pulled the bunches of firecrackers from his pocket, undid them before the children's wondering eyes. He went through a pantomime to tell them to take a coal from the fire, run out back with them, and touch it to the fuses.

"Take a coal, run back, and tech it to them strings," said Shorty, forgetting himself in his excitement. "It'll be the greatest fun ye' ever saw."

"What's that y're sayin'?" said Mrs. Bolster.

"Jest talkin' to the children," said Shorty, seeing with relief the children bolt out of the back door. He slipped his hand on his revolver, determined to kill the 'Squire, the Major, and the other three men before he would take a syllable of the oath.

"Come out here, men," said the Major authoritatively. Si slipped his hand into his pocket, grasped his revolver, and walked forward very slowly.

"Ahem," said the 'Squire, with an official cough. "Raise yer right hands, and repeat these words after me, givin' your own names."

The other rebels took off their hats.

The dogs raised a clamor, which directed all eyes to the road. Sol Simmons and the rest could be seen coming on a dead run.

"What does that mean?" said the Major anxiously.

At the same instant there was a series of crashes behind the house; the firecrackers were going off like a volley of rifle-shots. The Major whirled around to see

what that meant, and looked into the muzzle of Shorty's revolver.

"Surrender, or I'll kill you," shouted Shorty desperately. "Don't stop a minit. Throw up your hands, I tell you."

Si was making a similar demand on Tuggers, while the 'Squire was standing, open-mouthed, with the first word of the oath apparently still on his tongue.

The Major sprang at Shorty, whose bullet cut his hair. The next bullet caught the officer in the shoulder, and he reeled and went down. Si was not so fortunate with Tuggers, who succeeded in grappling him. Simmons dashed by and struck Si, in passing, with his fist, which sent him to the ground, with Tuggers on top.

The next minute the 'Squire, who was the only one who had any opportunity to look, saw Yankees pop out of the brush and jump the fences in a long, irregular line which immediately surrounded the house. Capt. McGillicuddy cut down Simmons with his sword, and the rest incontinently surrendered.

"We had got tired of waiting, and were on the point of dashing in anyhow, when we heard the firecrackers," said Capt. McGillicuddy, after the prisoners had been secured and things quieted down. "That fellow that I cut down was out there with a squad and caught sight of us, and started back this way, and I concluded to follow him up and jump the house. Neither of you hurt, are you?"

"Not hurt a mite," answered Shorty cheerfully, but it's the closest squeak I ever had. Wouldn't go through it agin for a pile o' greenbacks big as a cornshock. Say, Cap., you've made a ten-strike to-day that ought to make you a Major. That house's pium full o' contraband, and there's a lot o' important letters there. But, say, Cap., I want you to either kill that 'Squire or git him as fur away as possible. I ain't safe a minnit as long as him and that woman's a-nigh me."

CHAPTER XXXVI

AN UNEXPECTED MARRIAGE

The rebel Major accepted the unexpected turn of events with soldierly philosophy. Tuggers, captured in a blue uniform, saw the ignominious fate of a spy loom up before his eyes. His face grew very white and set. He sat down on a log, looked far away, and seemed oblivious to everything around him.

Jeff Hackberry and Sol Simmons were frightened into nerveless terror, and occasionally sighed and groaned audibly. Their men huddled together like frightened sheep, and looked anxiously at every move of their captors.

'Squire Corson had ventured two or three remarks in a judicial and advisory way, but had been ordered by Capt. McGillicuddy to sit down and keep quiet. He took a seat on a stump, pulled a large bandana out of his beaver crowned hat, wiped his bald head, and anxiously surveyed the scene as if looking for an opportunity when the power and dignity of the State of Tennessee might be invoked to advantage.

Only Mrs. Bolster retained her aggressiveness and her tongue. If anything, she seemed to be more savage and virulent than ever. She was wild that she had been outwitted, and particularly by Si, whose fluent speech had returned the moment the firecrackers went off. She poured out volleys of scorching epithets on all the Yankees from President Lincoln down to Corp'l Si Klegg, and fervently invoked for them speedy death and eternal torment where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

Capt. McGillicuddy rounded up his prisoners, took arms from those who still retained them, had Si and Shorty do what they could toward dressing the Major's wound, and then began an examination of the house.

He found abundant evidence of all that he, Si and Shorty had believed of it. It was a rendezvous for spies, both great and small—both those, like Mrs. Bolster, who

infested our camps, and got news of whatever was going on there, and those who operated on a larger scale, passing directly from the Headquarters of the rebels to the Headquarters of ours, and to the rear, and the sources of information at Nashville and Louisville. It was an important station on the route for smuggling gun-caps, quinine, medicines and other contraband from the North. Quantities of these were there waiting to be forwarded. As the source of the fighting whisky introduced into the camp of the 200th Ind. too much was known of it to require any further information. And it was more than probable that it was the scene of darker crimes—Union soldiers lured thither under some pretext, murdered and robbed.

"How in the world am I going to break this infernal nest up?" said Capt. McGillicuddy, with a puzzled air, after he had ordered the whisky destroyed and the other things gotten in shape to send back to camp. "By rights, I ought to burn that house down, but that would leave all these children without shelter. By the same token, I ought to shoot or at least send off to prison that old she-catamount, but that would mean starving the children to death. I declare, I don't know what to do."

He had drawn apart a little with Si and Shorty, to whom he spoke confidentially, while casting his eyes about him as if seeking some solution of the problem.

"If you'll allow me, Captain," said Shorty, "I've an idee. Now that we've got the trap, let's set it agin, and see if we can't ketch some more."

"Splendid idea, Shorty," said the Captain, catching on at once.

"And my idee," said Shorty, emboldened by the reception of his first suggestion, "is that you take all the company but me and Si and four or five of the boys back to camp, leavin' us here until to-morrow at least. There'll probably some very interestin' men happen along here to-night, not knowing what's happened, and we'll jest quietly yank 'em in."

"That's good," assented the Captain.

"In the meantime," continued Shorty, "you kin be considerin' what you'll do with the house. It may be best

to let it stand, and watch it. That's a good way to do with a bee-tree or a woodchuck hole.

"I believe you are right. I'll do as you say. Si, you and Shorty ick out as many men as you want to stay with you. I'll leave one of these horses with you. If you should happen to need any more, mount one of the boys and send him back for help. I'll come out with the whole company."

Shorty and Si consulted together for a few minutes, picked out their men, gave their names to the Captain, and received his assent to the selection. Then Shorty said:

"Captain, you don't want to take that old woman, the 'Squire and that skunk they call Jeff Hackberry back to camp with you, do you? Leave 'em here with us. I've got a little scheme."

"The old woman and the 'Squire you can take and welcome," answered the Captain. "I'll be glad to have them off my hands. But Hackberry is a rebel soldier. I don't know about giving him up."

"Leave him with us then. We'll turn him back to you all right, and the old woman and the 'Squire, too, if you want 'em."

"No," said the Captain, with an impatient wave of his hand. "Keep them, do what you please with them. If you should accidentally kill the old woman I should not be unduly distressed. But don't let Hackberry get away from you. I'll take the rest back to camp, and I must start at once, for it is getting late, and we didn't bring any rations with us. Do you suppose you can find enough around the house to keep you till morning?"

"O, yes," said Si. "There's a sack of meal in there and some side-meat. We gave the old woman a lot of coffee. We'll make out all right."

The prisoners had been watching the Captain and his men with greatest anxiety. They now saw Si with his squad take the 'Squire, Mrs. Bolster and Hackberry off to one side, while the Captain placed the remainder of the prisoners in the center of his company and started back to camp with them. There was something in this sepa-

ration that terrified even Mrs. Bolster, who stopped railing and began to look frightened.

"What are yo'uns goin' to do with we'uns," she inquired hoarsely of Si.

"You'll find out soon enough," said Si significantly. "Set down there on that log and think about what you deserve. You might put in any spare time you have in doing some big repentin'."

Hackberry began to whine and beg for mercy, but Shorty ordered him to keep silent.

"I want you to understand," said the 'Squire, "that I'm a regerlarly elected and qualified Magistrate o' the State o' Tennessee; that I'm not subjeck to military laws, and if any harm comes to me you'll have to answer for it to the State o' Tennessee."

"Blast the State o' Tennessee," said Shorty contemptuously. "When we git through there won't be no State o' Tennessee. It'll be roasting in the same log-heap with South Caroliny and Virginny, with Jeff Davis brilin' in the middle."

"Boys," ordered Si, "a couple of you look around the house and if see you can't find a mattock and shovel."

Terrible fears assailed the three unhappy prisoners at this. What could a mattock and shovel be wanted for but to dig their graves?

Shorty stepped over a little distance to a large clump of "red-sticks." These grow in long wands of brilliant red, as straight as a corn-stalk, and slenderer. They are much used about the farms of the South for rods for rough measurement. He cut one off about six feet long and stripped off its leaves. The anxious eyes of the prisoners followed every movement.

Two of the boys appeared with an old mattock and shovel.

"Guess you'd better dig right over there," said Si, indicating a little bare knoll.

"Nothin' else's ever bin planted there. At least nothin's ever come up. The chances are agin their comin' up if we plant 'em there."

"Stand up," said Shorty, approaching Hackberry with the bright crimson rod in his hand. "I'm goin' to meas-

ure you for a grass-green suit that'll last you till Gabriel blows his horn."

Hackberry gave a howl of terror. The 'Squire and Mrs. Bolster began a clamor of protests.

"Don't fuss," said Shorty calmly to them, as he took Hackberry's dimensions. "I ain't goin' to show no partiality. I'll serve you both the same way. Your turns'll come after his'n."

The children, aware that something unusual was going on, yet unable to comprehend what it was, stood silently around, their fingers in their mouths and their vacant eyes fixed in the stolid stare of the mountaineer youth. Even the dogs were quiet, and seemed watching the scene with more understanding than the children.

Mrs. Bolster's mood suddenly changed from bitter vituperation. She actually burst into tears, and began pleading for her life, and making earnest promises as to better conduct in the future. The 'Squire and Hackberry followed suit, and blubbered like schoolboys. Mrs. Bolster reminded Si and Shorty how she had saved them from being killed by the fierce Hackberry and the still fiercer Simmons. This seemed to move them. She tried a ghastly travesty of feminine blandishments by telling Shorty how handsome she had thought him, and had fallen in love with him at first sight. Shorty gave a grimace at this. He and Si stepped back a little for consultation.

When they came back Shorty said oracularly:

"Our orders is strict, and we should've carried 'em out at once. But, talkin' with my partner here, we're reminded o' somethin'. We believe it's the law that when a man or woman is sentenced to death the execution kin be put off if they kin find anybody to marry 'em. Is that good law, 'Squire?"

"H-m-m," answered the Magistrate, resuming his judicial manner at once; "that is a general belief, and I've heard o' some instances of it. But before sayin' positively, I should like to examine the authorities an' hear argyment."

"Well, ~~There~~ here haint goin' to be no continuance in this case for you to look up authorities and hear arguments,"

said Shorty decisively. "We're the higher court in this case, and we decided that the law's good enough for it. We've settled that if Mrs. Bolster'll marry Hackberry, and Hackberry'll marry Mrs. Bolster, and you'll marry 'em both, we'll grant a stay o' proceedings in the matter o' the execution o' the sentence o' death until we kin be advised by the higher authorities."

"I'll do anything, Mister," blubbered Hackberry. "I'll marry her this minnit. Say the words, 'Squire.'"

"I've said I'd rather die 10 times over than marry yo', Jeff Hackberry," murmured Mrs. Bolster. "I've bin the wife o' one ornery snipe of a whisky-sucking sang-digger, and when the Lord freed me from him I said I'd never git yoked with another. But I s'pose I've got to live for my children, though the Lord knows the yaller-headed brats haint wuth hit. They're everyone of 'em their dad over agin—all Bolsters, and not wuth the powder to blow 'em to kingdom come. I'd a heap ruther marry Jeff Hackberry to make sure o' havin' him shot than to save him from shootin'."

"You haint no choice, Madam," said Shorty severely. "Law and orders is strict on that pint."

"We'll, then," said she, "since hit's a ch'ice betwixt death and Jeff Hackberry, I'll take Jeff Hackberry; though I wouldn't take him on no other terms, and I'm afeared I'm makin' a mistake as hit is."

"What do you say, 'Squire?" asked Shorty.

"I've bin studyin' on jest whar I come in," answered the Magistrate. "These two save their necks by marryin', but do you understand that the law says that the Magistrate who marries 'em gits his neck saved?"

"The court is not clear on that as a p'int o' law," said Shorty; "but in the present case it'll hold that the 'Squire who does the splicin' gets as much of a rake-off as the rest. This is not to be considered a precedent, however."

"All right," assented the 'Squire; "let the couple jine hands."

With an air of glad relief, Hackberry sprang up and put out his hand. Mrs. Bolster came up more slowly and reluctantly grasped his hairy fist in her large, skinny

hand. The 'Squire stood up before them in his most impressive attitude.

"Hold on," suddenly called out Tom Welch, who was the "guard-house lawyer" of Co. Q, and constantly drawing the "Regulations," the "Tactics," and the "Constitution and Laws of the United States," in which he was sharply proficient, upon members of the regiment. "I raise the point that that 'Squire can't officiate until he has taken the oath of allegiance to the United States."

Si and Shorty looked at one another.

"That's a good point," said Si. He's got to take the oath of allegiance."

"Never," shouted the 'Squire, who had begun to recover his self-confidence. "Never, as long as I live. I've sworn allegiance to the Southern Confederacy, and won't take no other oath."

"Grave for one!" called out Shorty to the boys with the pick and shovel, as if he were giving an order in a restaurant. "Full size, and hurry up with it."

He picked up his measuring rod and started to take the 'Squire's dimensions.

The 'Squire wilted at once. "I s'pose I've got to yield to force," he muttered. "I'll take the oath."

"Who knows the oath?" inquired Si. "Do you, Tom?"

"Not exactly," replied Tom, non-plused for once. "But I know the oath we took when mustered in. That ought to do. What's good enough for us is good enough for him."

"Go ahead," ordered Si.

"We ought to have a Bible by rights," said Tom.

"Where kin we find your Bible, Mrs. Bolster?" asked Si.

"We'uns air done clean out o' Bibles," she said, rather shamefacedly. "Thar haint nary one in the house. I allers said we orter have a Bible. Hit looked 'spectable to have one in the house. But Andy allers wanted every cent to guzzle on."

"Here's a Testament. That'll do," said Tom, handing Si one which some of the boys had about him. "Le's make 'em all take the oath while we're at it."

"You'll all raise your right hands," said Si, opening the book. "Place your left on this book, and repeat the words after that man there, givin' your own names." Si

was as solemn about it as he believed everyone should be at such a ceremony. Hackberry and Mrs. Bolster were not sure which were their right hands, but Si finally got them started, and Tom Welch repeated slowly and impressively:

"You do solemnly swear to support the Constitution and laws of the United States, and all laws made in pursuance thereof, against all enemies and opposers whatsoever, whether foreign or domestic, and to obey the orders of all officers duly appointed over you. So help you God, and kiss the book."

"And to quit liquor selling, smuggling, spying and giving aid and comfort to the enemy," added Shorty, and this was joined to the rest of the oath.

"I ought to have added that they wash their faces once a day, and put more shortenin' and fillin' in Mrs. Bolster's pies," said Shorty in an undertone to Si. "But I suppose we oughtn't to ask impossible things."

"Now go ahead with the wedding ceremony," ordered Si.

Again the 'Squire commanded them to join hands, and after mumbling over the fateful words he pronounced Thomas Jefferson Hackberry and Mrs. Sarah Bolster man and wife.

"Now," said Shorty, who felt at last fully insured against a great danger, "I believe it's the law and custom for all the witnesses to a weddin' to see the bride and groom in bed together. You'll go inside the house and take one of them beds, and after we've seen you there we'll consider your cases further. You're all right, anyway, until we hear from camp to-morrow."

Amid the grins of the rest of the boys he conducted the newly-wed into the house.

He and Si brought out the sack of meal, a few cooking utensils, a side of bacon, and the package of coffee, which they gave to the other boys to get supper with. They closed the door behind them, excluding the children and dogs, and left the pair to their own reflections.

"Gentlemen, what air you gwine to do with me?" asked the 'Squire. "I'd powerful like to git on home, if you've no further use for me."

"We haint decided what to do with you, you old foment-er o' rebellion," said Si. "We ought to shoot you for what you've done in stirring up these men to fight us. We'll settle your case to-morrow. You'll stay with us till then. We'll give you your supper, and after awhile you kin go in and sleep in that other bed, with the children."

The 'Squire gave a dismal groan at the prospect, which was lost on the boys, who were very hungry and hurrying around helping to get supper.

They built a fine fire and cooked a bountiful meal, of which all, including the 'Squire and children, partook heartily. A liberal portion, with big cups of strong coffee, were sent into the bridal couple. As bed-time drew near, they sent the 'Squire and the children into the house, and divided themselves up into reliefs to watch during the night.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SI AND SHORTY WORK THE TRAP SUCCESSFULLY.

The boys were sitting around having another smoke before crawling into their blankets, spread under the shade of the scraggly locusts and mangy cedars, when the dogs raised an alarm.

"Get back under the shadow of the trees, boys, and keep quiet," said Si.

"Hello, the house!" came out of the darkness at the foot of the hill.

"Hello, thar, yourself," answered Shorty, imitating Mrs. Bolster's voice.

"Hit's me—Brad Tingle. Don't yo' know my voice? Call off yer dogs. They'll eat me up."

"Hullo, Brad; is that yo'? Whar'd yo come from? Git out, thar, Watch! Lay down, Tige! Begone, Bones! Come on up, Brad."

Shorty's imitations of Mrs. Bolster's voice and manner were so good as to deceive even the dogs, who changed their attitude of shrill defiance to one of fawning welcome.

"Whar'd yo' come from, Brad?" repeated Shorty as the newcomer made his way up the narrow, stony path.

"Jest from the Yankee camps," answered the newcomer. "Me an' Jim Wyatt's bin over thar by that Hoosier camp tryin' t' git the drop on their Kurnel as he was gwine t' Brigade Headquarters. We a'most had him when a company o' Yankees that'd bin out in the country for something a'most run over us. They'uns wuz a-nigh on top o' we'uns afore we seed they'uns, an' then we'uns had t' scatter. Jim run one way an' me another. I come back here t' see ef yo' had any o' the boys here. I hearn tell that a passel o' Yankee ossifers is at a dance over at the Widder Brewster's, an' I thought we'uns might done gether they'uns in ef we'uns went about it right."

"So you kin—so you kin," said Shorty, reaching out from behind the bushes and catching him by the collar.

"And, to show you how, I'll jest gether you in.

A harsh, prolonged, sibilant, far-reaching hiss came from the door of the cabin, but came too late to warn Brad Tingle of the trap into which he was walking.

Shorty understood it at once. He jerked Tingle forward into Si's strong clutch, and then walked toward the cabin, singing out angrily:

"Jeff Hackberry, I want you to make that wife o' your'n mind her own bisness, and let other people's alone. You and her've got quite enough to do to tend to your honeymoon, without mixing into things that don't concern you. Take her back to bed and keep her there."

He went back to where Si was disarming and searching Tingle. The prisoner had a United States musket, cartridge-box, canteen, and a new haversack, all of which excited Shorty's ire.

"You hound, you," he said, taking him by the throat with a fierce grasp, "you've bin bushwhacking, and got these things off some soldier you sneaked onto and killed. We ought to kill you right now, like we would a dog."

"No, Mister, I haint killed nobody; I swar t' God I haint," gurgled the prisoner, trying to release his throat from Shorty's grip.

"Where'd you git these things?" demanded Shorty.

"Mrs. Bolster gi' me the gun an' cartridge-box; I done found the canteen in the road, an' the poke with the letters in hit the Yank had done laid down beside him when he stopped t' git a drink, an' me an' Jim crep' up on him an' ordered him to surrender. He jumped an' run, an we wuz afeared to shoot least we bring the rest o' the Yanks down onto us."

At the mention of letters Si began eagerly examining the contents of the haversack. He held some of them down to the light of the fire, and then exclaimed excitedly:

"Why, boys, this is our mail. It was Will Gobright they were after."

A sudden change came over Shorty. He took the prisoner by the back of the neck and ran him up to the

door of the house and flung him inside. Then he hastened back to the fire and said:

"Le's see them letters."

A pine-knot had been thrown on the fire to make a bright blaze, by the light of which Si was laboriously fumbling over the letters. Even by the flaring, uncertain glare it could be seen that a ruddy hue came into his face as he came across one with a gorgeous flag on one end of the envelope, and directed in a pinched, labored hand on straight lines scratched by a pin. He tried to slip the letter unseen by the rest into his blouse pocket, but fumbled it so badly that he dropped the rest in a heap at the edge of the fire.

"Look out, Si," said Shorty crossly, and hastily snatching the letters away from the fire. "You'll burn up somebody's letters, and then there'll be no end o' trouble. You're clumsier'n a foundered horse. Your fingers are all thumbs."

"Handle them yourself, if you think you kin do any better," said Si, who, having got all that he wanted, lost interest in the rest. If Si's fingers were all thumbs, Shorty's seemed all fists. Besides, his reading of handwriting was about as laborious as climbing a ladder. He tackled the lot bravely, though, and laboriously spelled out and guessed one address after another, until suddenly his eye was glued on a postmark that differed from the others. "Wis." first caught his glance, and he turned the envelope around until he had spelled out "Bad Ax" as the rest of the imprint. This was enough. Nobody else in the regiment got letters from Bax Ax, Wis. He fumbled the letter into his blouse pocket, and in turn dropped the rest at the edge of the fire, arousing protests from the other boys.

"Well, if any o' you think you kin do better'n I kin, take 'em up. There they are," said he. "You go over 'em, Tom Welch. I must look around a little."

Shorty secretly caressed the precious envelope in his pocket with his great, strong fingers, and pondered as to how he was going to get an opportunity to read the letter before daylight. It was too sacred and too sweet to be opened and read before the eyes of his unsympathetic,

teasing comrades, and yet it seemed an eternity to wait till morning. He stole a glance out of the corner of his eye at Si, who was going through the same process, as he stood with abstracted air on the other side of the fire. The sudden clamor of the dogs recalled them to present duties.

"Hullo, the house!" came out of the darkness.

"Hullo, yourself!" replied Shorty, in Mrs. Bolster's tones.

"It's me—Groundhog. Call off yer dogs."

Si and Shorty looked startled, and exchanged significant glances. "Needn't 've told it was him," said Shorty. "I could smell his breath even this far. Hullo, Groundhog," he continued in loud tones. "Come on up. Git out, Watch! Lay down, Tige! Begone, Bones! Come on up, Groundhog. What's the news?"

A louder, longer, more penetrating hiss than ever sounded from the house. Shorty looked around angrily. Si made a break for the door.

"No, I can't come up now," said Groundhog; "I jest come by to see if things wuz all right. A company went out o' camp this mornin' for some place that I couldn't find out. I couldn't git word t' you, an' I've bin anxious 'bout whether it come this way."

"Never tetched us," answered Shorty, in perfect reproduction of Mrs. Bolster's accents. "We'uns is all right."

The hissing from the cabin became so loud that it seemed impossible for Groundhog not to hear it.

"Blast it, Si, can't you gag that old guinea-hen," said Shorty, in a savage undertone.

Si was in the meanwhile muttering all sorts of savage threats at Mrs. Bolster, the least of which was to go in and choke the life out of her if she did not stop her signalling.

"Glad t' hear it," said Groundhog. "I was a leetle skeery all day about it, an' come out as soon's I could. Have yo' seed Brad Tingle?"

"Yes; seen him to-day."

"D' yo' know whar he is? Kin yo' git word to him quick?"

"Yes, indeed; right off."

"Well, send word to him as soon as you kin, that I've

got the mules ready for stampedin' an' runnin' off at any time, an' waitin' for him. The sooner he kin jump the corral the better. To-night if he kin, but suttently not later'n to-morrer night. Be sure and git word to him by early to morrer mornin' at the furthest."

"I'll be sure t' git word t' him this very night," answered the fictitious Mrs. Bolster.

"Well, good-night. I must hurry along, an' git back afore the second relief goes off. All my friends air on it. See yo' ter-morrer, if I kin."

"You jest bet you'll see me to-morrow," said Shorty grimly, as he heard Groundhog's mule clatter away. "If you don't see me the disappointment 'll come nigh breaking my heart. Now I'll go in and learn Mr. and Mrs. Hackberry now to spend the first night o' their wedded lives."

"I don't keer ef yo' do shoot me. I'd a heap ruther be shot than not," she was saying to Si as Shorty came up. "I've changed my mind sence I've bin put in here. I'd a heap ruther die than live with Jeff Hackberry."

"Never knowed married folks to git tired o' one another so soon," commented Shorty. "But I should've thought that Jeff'd got tired first. But this is no time to fool around with fambly jars. Look here, Jeff Hackberry, you must make that wife o' yourn keep quiet. If she tries to give another signal we'll tie you up by the thumbs now, besides shoot you in the mornin'."

"What kin I do with her?" whined Jeff.

"Do with her? You kin make her mind. That's your duty. You're the head o' the fambly."

"Head o' the fambly?" greaned Jeff, in mournful sarcasm. "Mister, you don't seem to be acquainted with Sal."

"Head o' the fambly," sneered his wife. "He aint the head o' nothin'. Not the head o' a pin. He haint no more head'n a fishworm."

"Look here, woman," said Shorty, "didn't you promise to love, honor and obey him?"

"No, I didn't nuther. I said I'd shove, hammer an' belay him. Hit's none o' yer bizniss, nohow, yo' sneakin' Yankee, what I do to him. You hain't no call t' mix in

betwixt him an' me. An' my mouth's my own. I'll use hit jest as I please, in spite o' yo' an' him, an' 40 others like yo'. Hear that?"

"Well, you git back into that bed, an' stay there, and don't you dare give another signal, or I'll buck-and-gag you on your wedding-night."

"Don't you dar tetch me," she said menacingly.

"I aint goin' to touch you. I'm too careful what I touch. But I'll tie you to that bed and gag you, if you don't do as I say. Get back into bed at once."

"I ain't gwine t', an' yo' can't make me," she said defiantly.

"Take hold of her, Jeff," said Shorty, pulling out his bayonet and giving that worthy a little prod.

Jeff hesitated until Shorty gave him a more earnest prod, when he advanced toward his wife, but, as he attempted to lay his hands on her shoulders, she caught him, gave him a quick twist and a trip, and down he went; but he had clutched her to save himself from falling, and brought her down with him. Shorty caught her elbows and called to Si to bring him a piece of cord, with which he tied her arms. Another piece bound her ankles. She lay on the floor and railed with all the vehemence of her vicious tongue.

"Pick her up and lay her on the bed there," Shorty ordered Jeff. Jeff found some difficulty in lifting the tall, bony frame, but Shorty gave him a little help with the ponderous but agile feet, and the woman was finally gotten on the bed.

"Now, we'll gag you next, if you make any more trouble," threatened Shorty. "We don't allow no woman to interfere with military operations."

They had scarcely finished this when the dogs began barking again, and Si and Shorty hurried out. The operations in the house had rather heated them, the evening was warm, and Shorty had taken off his blouse and drawn it up inside of his belt, in the rear.

The noise of the dogs betokened the approach of something more than usual visitors. Through the clamor the boys' quick ears could detect the clatter of an ominous

number of hoofs. The other boys heard it, too, and were standing around, gun in hand, waiting developments.

"Hullo, dere, de house!" came in a voice Si and Shorty dimly recognized having heard somewhere before.

"Hullo, yourself," answered Shorty. "Who air yo'?"

"I'm Gapt. Littles," came back above the noise of barking. "Gall off your togs. I'm all righdt. Is it all righdt up dere?"

"Yes. Lay down, Watch! Git out, Tige!" Shorty started to answer, when he was interrupted by the apparition of Mrs. Bolster-Hackberry flying out of the door, and yelling at the top of her voice:

"No, hit ain't all right at all, Captain. The Yankees 've got us. Thar's a right smart passel o' 'em here, with we'uns prisoners. Jump 'em, if yo' kin. If yo' can't, skeet out an' git enough t' down 'em an' git us out."

Si and Shorty recognized that the time for words was passed. They snatched up their guns and fired in the direction of the hail. The other boys did the same. There was a patter of replying shots, aimed at the fire around which they had been standing, but had moved away from.

Apparently, Capt. Littles thought the Yankees were in too great force for him to attack, for his horses could be heard moving away. The boys followed them with shots aimed at the sound. Si and Shorty ran down forward a little ways, hoping to get a better sight. The rebels halted, apparently dismounted, got behind a fence and began firing back at intervals.

Si and Shorty fired from the point they had gained, and drew upon themselves quite a storm of shots.

"Things look bad," said Si to Shorty. "They've halted there to hold us while they send for reinforcements. We'd better go back to the boys and get things in shape. Mebbe we'd better send back to camp for help."

"We'll wait till we find out more about 'em," said Shorty, as they moved back. They had to cross the road, upon the white surface of which they stood out in bold contrast and drew some shots which came unfortably close.

The other boys, after a severe struggle, had caught Mrs. Bolster-Hackberry and put her back in the cabin.

After a brief consultation, it was decided to hold their ground until daylight. They could get into the cabin, and by using it as a fortification, stand off a big crowd of enemies. The rest of the boys were sent inside to punch out loop-holes between the logs, and make the place as defensible as possible. Si and Shorty were to stay outside and observe.

"I've got an idee how to fix that old woman," said Shorty suddenly.

"Buck-and-gag her?" inquired Si.

"No; we'll go in there and chuck her down that hole where she kept her whisky, and fasten the hasp in the staple."

"Good idee, if the hole will hold her."

"It's got to hold her. We can't have her rampaging round during the fight. I'd rather have a whole company o' rebels on my back."

They did not waste any words with the old woman, but despite her yells and protests Si took hold of one shoulder, Shorty the other, and forced her down in the pit and closed the puncheon above her.

They went out again to reconnoiter. The enemy was quiet, apparently waiting. Only one shot, fired in the direction of the fire, showed that they were still there.

Shorty suddenly bethought him of his blouse, in the pocket of which was the precious letter. He felt for it. It was gone. He was stunned.

"I remember, now," he said to himself, "it was working out as I ran, and it slipped down as I climbed the fence."

He said aloud:

"Si, I've lost my blouse. I dropped it down there jest before we crossed the road. I'm goin' to get it."

"Blast the blouse," said Si; "let it be till mornin'. You need something worse'n a blouse to-night. You'll ketch a bullet sure's you're alive if you try to go acrost that road agin. They rake it."

"I don't care if they do," said Shorty desperately. "I'd go down there if a battery raked it. There's a letter in the pocket that I must have."

Si instinctively felt for the letter in his own pocket.

"Very well," he said; "if you feel as if you must go I'll go along."

"No, you sha'n't. You stay here in command; it's your duty. You can't help if you do go. I'll go alone. I'll tell you what you might do, though. You might go over there to the left and fire on 'em, as if we wuz feelin' around that way. That'll draw some o' their attention."

Si did as suggested.

Shorty crept back to the point they had before occupied. The rebels saw him coming over a little knoll, and fired at him. He ran for the fence. He looked over at the road, and thought he saw the blouse lying in the ditch on the opposite side. He sprang over the fence and ran across the road. The rebels had anticipated this and sent a volley into the road. One bullet struck a small stone, which flew up and smote Shorty's cheek so sharply that he reeled. But he went on across, picked up the blouse, found the dear letter, and deliberately stopped in the road until he transferred it to the breast of his shirt. Then he sprang back over the fence, and stopped there a moment to rest. He could hear the rebel Captain talking to his men, and every moment the accents of the voice became more familiar.

"Don'd vaste your shods," he was saying. "Don'd vire undil you sees somedings to shood ad, unt den vire to hid. See how many shods you haf alretty vired mitout doing no goot. You must dink dat ammunition's as blenty as vater in de Southern Gonfederacy. If you hat as much drouble as I haf to ket cartridges you would pe more gareful of dem."

Capt. Littles was Rosenbaum, the Jew spy, masquerading in a new role. Shorty's heart leaped. Instantly he thought of a way to let Rosenbaum know whom he had run up against.

"Corporal Si Klegg!" he called out in his loudest tones.

"What is it, Shorty?" answered the wondering Si.

"Don't let any more o' the boys shoot over there to the left. That's the way Capt. McGillicuddy's a-comin' in with Co. Q. I think I kin see him now jest raisin' the hill. Yes, I'm sure it's him."

The next instant he heard the rebel Captain saying to his men:

"Poys, dey're coming up in our rear. Dey're de men ve saw a liddle while ago. De only vay is to mount un make a rush past de house. All mount unt vollow me as vast as dey gan."

There was a gallop of horsemen up the road, and they passed by like the wind, while Si and Shorty fired as fast as they could load—Shorty over their heads, Si at the noise. Just opposite the house the Captain's horse stumbled, and his rider went over his head into a bank of weeds. The rest swept on, not heeding the mishap.

"Surrender, Levi," said Shorty, running up.

"Certainly, my tear poy," said Rosenbaum. "Any-ding dat you vant. How are you, any vay? Say, da' vas a nead drick, vasn't it? Haf your horse sdumble unt trow you jest ad de righd dime unt blace? It dook me a long dime to deach my horse dat. I'm mighty glat to see you."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MR. ROSENBAUM RECITES A THRILLING EXPERIENCE.

"Hist, poys, don'd dalk vriendly to me oud lout," said the prudent Rosenbaum. "Vhat's habbened? I know you haf god de house. I haf peen eggsbecting vor a long dime dat dere would pe a raid made ubon id. Vhat der deffil is dat saying you haf: 'Id's a long vorm dat don'd haf a durn.' No; dat isn't id. 'Id's an ill lane dat plows nopody any goot.' No; dat's nod id, neider. Vell, any-fay, Mrs. Sally unt her growd god entirely doo pold. Dey blayed doo oben, unt I knew dey'd soon ged gedched. Who dit you ged in de house?"

Si started to call over the names, and to recite the circumstances, but as he reached that of Brad Tingle, Rosenbaum clutched him by the arm and said earnestly:

"Holt on. Dell me the resd afder avhile. I'm avraid of dat man. He's gome breddy near gedding on do me seferal dimes alretty. He's lisdening now, unt he'll pe sure to susbect somedings, if he don'd hear you dreating me as you dit de udders. Pegin svearing ad me as you dit at de rest."

Shorty instantly took the hint.

"I'll stand no more foolishness," he called out angrily. "If you don't surrender at once I'll blow your rebel head off."

"I'll haf to gif ub," Rosenbaum replied in an accent of pain, "for I pelief I proke my leg vhen I vell. I vind I gan't stant ub."

"Give up your arms, then, and we'll help you up to the fire, and see how badly you're hurt," said Si.

Rosenbaum gave groans of anguish as Si and Shorty picked him up and carried him over to the fire.

"Now we're out of ear-shot o' the house," said Si, as they deposited him on the opposite side, and somewhat behind a thicket of raspberries, "and we can talk. Where did you come from this time, Levi?"

"Sdraighd vrom Cheneral Pragg's Headquarters at Tul-

lahoma, unt I haf god information dat vill make Cheneral Rosecrans's heart chump vor choy. I haf god de news he has peen vaiting vor all dese weeks to move his army. I haf god de numper of Pragg's men, chust vhere dey are sdadioned, unt how many is ad each blace. I'm grazy to ged to Cheneral Rosecrans mit de news. I haf peen cavorting around de goundry all day drying some vay to ged in, unt at my vits' ent, vor some of de men mit me hat deir susbicions of me, unt wouldn't haf hesidated to shood me, if dey ditn't like de vay I vas acding. Dell de druth, id's peen gedding bredy hod vor me ofer dere in de reppel lines. Doo many men haf seen me in de Yankee gamps. Dis man, Brad Tingle, has seen me twice at Cheneral Rosecrans's Headqvarters, unt has toldt a lod of sdories dat mate much drubbles. I dink dat dis is de lasd visid I'll bay Cheneral Pragg. I'm vont of visiting, bud id radder disgourages me to pe so dat I gan't look ad a limb running oud vrom a dree mitout dinking dat it may pe vhere dey vill hang me."

"Excuse me from any such visitin'," said Si sympathetically. "I'd much rather stay at home. I've had 12 or 15 hours inside the enemy's lines, playin' off deserter, and I've had enough to last me my three years. I'll take any day o' the battle o' Stone River in preference. I aint built for the spy business in any shape or form. I'm plain, out-and-out Wabash prairie style—everything above ground and in sight."

"Well, I'm different from you," said Shorty. "I own up that I'm awfully fond o' a game o' hocus-pocus with the rebels, and tryin' to see which kin thimble-rig the other. It's mighty excitin' gamblin' when your own head's the stake, an' beats poker an' faro all holler. But I want the women ruled out o' the game. Never saw a game yit that a woman wouldn't spile if she got her finger in."

"Mrs. Bolster came mighty near marrying him, and he's pale yet from the scare," Si explained.

"Yes," said Shorty frankly. "You'll see I'm still white all around the gills. Never wuz so rattled in my life. That woman's a witch. You could only kill her by shooting her with a silver bullet. She put a spell on me, sure's you're a foot high. Lord, wouldn't I like to be able

to manage her. I'd set her up with a faro-bank or a sweat-board, and she'd win all the money in the army in a month."

"Yes, she's a derror," accorded Rosenbaum. "She mate up her mindt to marry me vhen I virst come down here. I vas awfully sgared, vor I vas sure she saw drough me sharber dan de men dit, and vould marry me or expose me. Bud I god some boints on her apout bizening a neighboring voman dat she hated unt vas jealous of, unt den I blayed an immediate orter vrom Cheneral Pragg to me to rebort to his Headqvarters. Pud it dook all de prains I hat to keeb her off me."

"She's safe now from marryin' anybody for awhile, said Shorty, and he related the story of her nuptials, which amused Rosenbaum greatly.

"Pud you haf signed Jeff Hackberry's death-varrant, he said. "If he dries to lif mit her she'll veed him vild barsnip, ant he'll ket a house of ret glay, dat you put de roof on mit a shoffel. Id'll pe no kreat loss. Jeff aind vorth in a year de pread he'll ead in a day."

"She may be smothered in that hole," Shorty bethought himself. "I guess we'd better let her out for awhile."

"Yes," said Rosenbaum. "She gan't do no harm now. Nopody else vill come dis vay to-nighd. De men dat vas mit me vill sga ter de news dat de house is in Yankee hants. Dey dink dere's a pig vorce here, unt so ve von't pe disturped dill morning."

"Then I'll go in and let her out," said Shorty."

The other inmates of the cabin were asleep when he entered, but they waked up, and begged him not to let the woman out until morning.

"Keep her in there till daylight," said 'Squire Corson, "and then restore me to my home and functions, and I'll call out a posse comitatus, and have her publicly ducked, according to the laws of the land, as a common scold. I've never heard such vile language as she applied to me when I gave her the advice it was my duty to give to live in peace and quietness with her husband. That there woman's a Niagary of cuss words and abuse."

"If yo' let her out, take me outside with yo'," begged Jeff Hackberry. "She'll kill me. sho', if I've to stay in

here 'till mornin' with her. She begun by flingin' a bag o' red pepper in my face, and set us all to sneezin' until I thought the 'Squire'd sneeze his durned head off. Then she jobbed me with a bayonet, and acted as no woman orter to act toward her lawful husband, no matter how long they'd bin married, let alone their weddin' night."

"Sorry, but it's agin all my principles to separate man and wife," said Shorty, as he moved to the puncheon trap-door and undid the hasp. "You took her for better or worse, and it's too early in the game to complain that you found her a blamed sight worse than you took her for. You're one now, you know, and must stay that way until death do you part."

Shorty lifted up the trap-door, and Si helped the woman out with some difficulty. They expected a torrent of abuse, but she seemed limp and silent, and sank down on the floor. The boys picked her up and laid her on the bed beside Jeff Hackberry.

"She's fainted; she's dead. She's bin sufferkated in that hole," said Jeff.

"No, yo' punkin-headed fool," she gasped. "I haint dead, nor I haint fainted, nor I haint sufferkated. Yo'll find out when I git my wind back alittle. I'm so full o' mad an' spite that I'm done tuckered clean out. I'm clean beat, so clean beat that I haint got no words to fit the 'casion. I've got t' lay still an' think an' gether up some."

"She's comin' to, Shorty," said Si. "It'll be pleasanter outside."

"You say you have been having unusually exciting times," said Si to Rosenbaum, as the boys again seated themselves by the fire.

"Vell, I should say so," replied Rosenbaum with emphasis. "Do you know dat Cheneral Pragg is de very vorst man dat effer lifed?"

"All rebels are bad," said Shorty oracularly. "But I suppose that some are much worse than others. I know that the private soldiers are awful, and I suppose the higher you go the wuss they are. The Corporals are cussider than the privates, the Sergeants can give the Corporals points in devilishness, and so it goes on up

until the General commanding an army must be one of the devil's favorite imps, while Jeff Davis is Old Horney's junior partner."

"No; id isn't dat," said Rosenbaum. "I'fe known a goot many reppel Chenerals, unt some of dem aind really pad vellers, oudside off deir rebelness. Pud olt Pragg is a corn deffil. He has no more heart dan a rattlesnake. He actually lofes gruelty. He'd radder kill men dan not. I'fe seen blenty of officers who vere endirely doo villing to shood men for liddle or nodding. Cheneral Pragg is de only man I effer saw who vould shood men for nodding at all—yust 'for example,' as he says, unt to make de odders afraidt unt reaty to opey him. He goolly galgulates to shood so many effery month. If dey've done anyding to deserfe it, all righd. If dey haint, he shoos dem all de same, yust to 'preserfe discipline.'"

Si and Shorty uttered exclamations of surprise at this cold-blooded cruelty.

"I know id's hart to belief," said Rosenbaum, "put id's drue all de same, as anypody aroundt his Headqvarters vill dell you. Cheff Davis knows id unt abbroyes id. He is the same kind of a man as Chencral Pragg—no more heart dan a tiger. I haf seen a goot deal of de inside of de reppel army, unt Cheneral Pragg is de goldest-plooded, gruelest man in id or de whole vorld. Id's drue dat de men he orters shod are chenerally of no agground, like your man Jeff Hackberry—put id's de brincible of de ding dat shocks me. He yust dakes a dislike to de vay a man looks or acts, or de vay he barts his hair, looks at him mit his steely gray eyes, unt says goldly, 'Pud him in the pull-ben.' In de pull-ben de boor deffil goes, unt de next time Cheneral Pragg geds an idea dat de discipline of de army is running town, unt he must stiffen it ub mit a few executions, he orters all de men dat habben to pe in de pull-ben daken oud unt shod."

"Without any trial, any court-martial, any evidence against them?" gasped Si.

"Apsoludely mitout anyding put Cheneral Pragg's orders. It is like you read of in de pooks apoud dose Eastern gountries vhere de Sultan or odder High-muk-a-

ruk says 'Gut dat man's headt off,' unt de man's head is gut off, unt no questions asked, unt no funeral ceremonies execept vashing up de blood."

"'Lucky for you, Levi,'" said Shorty, "that he didn't have any of the common prejudices against Jews, and slap you in the bull-pen."

"O, pud he dit," said Rosenbaum. "He naded a Chew vorse dan any man I effer med. Unt it prought me so near death dat I actually vatched dem digging my grafe."

"While I hat my ubs ant towns, unt some very narrow esgapes," continued Rosenbaum, "vhen I virst vent in-site Pragg's lines, I got along very vell chenerally. I blayed de beddler unt smuggler for de Southern Gonfederacy in great shabe, unt run dem drough a lot of gun-caps, quinine, medicines, unt so on, unt prought in a great deal of invormation, vvhich dey fount to be drue. Some of dis Gen. Rosecrans gafe me himself, for he is smart enough to know dat if he vants his Segret Service men to succeed he must gif dem straight goods to garry to de enemy."

"I prought in exact sdadements of vvat divisions, pri-gades unt rechiments vere at dis blace unt dat blace, how many men vas in dem, who deir gommanders vere, unt so on. Cheneral Rosecrans vould haf dese gifen me. It helbed him in his blans to know yust vvat information vas reaching de enemy, for he knew yust how olt Pragg vould act vhen he hat certain knowledge. If he knew dat Sheridan mit 6,000 men vas at dis blace, mit Tom Vood 10 miles away mit 6,000 more, he vould do a certain ding, unt Rosecrans vould brovide for id. De news dat I prought in de reppels gould dest by de reborts dey got from oãders, unt dey always vound mine gorrect."

"My vork bleased de reppel Chenerals so vell dat dey made me a Gaptain in deir army, dransferred me from Prigade Headquarters to Division, unt den to Corps Headquarters. I vas given gommand of squads of sgouts. I can draw very vell, unt I mate goot maps of de gountry unt de roats, mit de bositions of Yankee unt reppel vorces. Dis vas sometlings dat de other reppel sbies gould not do, unt it helped me leds. I vas gareful to

make gopies off all dese maps, unt dey god to Cheneral Rosecrans's Headqvarters.

"De other reppel sbies got very jealous of me pecause I vas bromoted ofer dem, unt dey laid all sorts of blans to drip me ub. Dey game awful near gatching me seferal dimes, put I vas too smard for dem, unt gould outvit dem, vhenever I got a pointer as to vhat dey vere up to. Vonce dey vatched me go to a hollow sycamore dree, vvhich I used as a bostoffice for Chim Chones to ged de dings I wanted to sent to Cheneral Rosecrans. Dey vount dere maps I hat mate of Shelbyville, mit de bositions of de reppel unt Yankee vorces unt de vortifications all shown.

"Dat vas an awful glose gall, unt I gould feel de robe dighdening around my neck. Put I kebt my nerfe, unt told a sdraight sdory. I sait dat dat dree vas my rekular office, vhere I kebt lods of dings dat I vas avraid to garry aroundt mit me vhen I vas in tanger of valling into de Yankee hants, as I vas efery day vhen I vas sgouting. Luckily for me I had some other brivate dings unt a lod of Gonfederate money hid dere, too, vvhich I showed dem. Dey didn't more dan half-belief my sdory, put dey led me off, probably pecause dey needed me so pad.

"I saw dat de ding vas only skimmed ofer, and vas ready to preak out again any minute vorse dan effer, unt I kept my eyes peeled all de dime. Dat's vone reason vhy you haf not seen me vor so long. I ditn't dare send Cheneral Rosecrans anyding, or go near oudsite de reppel lines. I had to blay very goot, put I kept gathering ub invormation for de day vhen I should make a final preak unt leave de reppels for goot.

"A veek ago I vas ordered to go up to Cheneral Pragg's Headqvarters to help dem mit deir maps unt reborts. Dey had nopody dere dat gould do de vork, unt Cheff Davis, who alvays vants to know efery dings apoud de armies, vas bunching dem ub safagely vor vull invormation. He wanted accurade sdadements apout de Yankee sdrength unt bositions, unt apout de reppel sdrength unt bositions, to see if he gouldn't do somedings to pull de Yankees off of Bemberton at Vicksburg. Pragg's Adju-

tant-Cheneral sent vord drough all de army vor to vind goot rabid benmen unt map-makers, unt I vas sent ub.

"De Adjutant-Cheneral set me to vork under a fly near Headqvarters, unt he vas dickled almost to death mit de vay I dit my vork. Olt Pragg himself used to valk up unt town near, krowling unt cussing unt svearing at efferyding unt efferypody. Vonce or twice de Adjutant-Cheneral galled his addention to my vork. Olt Pragg yust looked it ofer, grunted, unt bored me drough unt drough mit dose sharp, cold gray eyes of his. But I dought I vas safe so long as I vas at Headqvarters, unt I gafe a great stiff to other Segret Serfice men who hat been drying to down me.

"Vun morning olt Pragg vas in an awful demper—de vorst I hat effer seen. Effery vord unt order vas a gruelty to somepody. Vinally, up gomes dis Brad Tingle dat you haf inside. He is a sort of a half-sby—nod prains enough to pe a real vone, put mit a goot deal of gourage unt agdividy to do small vork. He hat peen sent py Cheneral Cheatham to garry some babers unt make a rebort. Whateffer it vas, it put olt Pragg in a vorse demper dan effer. Brad Tingle habba a to catch sighd of me, unt he said in a surprised vay:

"Vhy, dere's dat Chew I saw sidding in Cheneral Rosecrans's dent dalking to him, vhen I vas blaying of refugee Tennesean in de Yankee gamps."

"Vhat's dat? Vhat's dat, my man?" said olt Pragg, who habbened to oferhear him.

"Brad Tingle dolt all he knew apoud me. Olt Pragg durned doward me unt gif me such a look. I gould veel dose cold, gruel eyes boring sdraighd drough me.

"Certainly, he is a Chew, unt vone of olt Rosecrans's pest sbies," he said. "Olt Rosecrans is a Chew, a Dutch Chew, himself. I knowed him vell in de olt Army. He's got a rekular Chew vace. He blays off Gatholic, put dat is to hite his Chewishness. He gan't do id. Dat hook nose'd gif him avay if nodding else dit, unt he haf got enough else. He likes to haf Chews apoud him, pecause he unterstants dem petter dan he does vHITE people, unt bardicularly he is vond off Chew sbies. He gan drust dem vhere nopodyelse gan. Dey'll pe drue to him pe-

cause he is a Chew. Put dat man in de pull-ben, unt shood him mit de rest to-morrow morning.'

"Heavens,' gasped de Adjutant-Cheneral; 'he is py var de pest man I haf efer hat. I gan'd ged along mitoud him.'

"You musd ged along mitoud him,' sait olt Pragg. 'I'm asdonished at you hafing such a man aroud. Where



"OLT PRAGG USED TO VALK UP UNT TOWN, KROWLING UNT CUSSING."

in de world dit you bick him ub? Pud id's yust like you. How in God's name Cheff Tavis expects me to gommand an army mit such makeshifts of sdaff officers as he sends me, I don'd know. He keeps de pest vor olt Lee unt sends me vhat nopody else'll haf, unt den expects me to vin pattles against a petter army dan de Army of

de Potomac. I nefer god a sdaff officer dat has prains vonce.'

"A Sergeant of de Provost-Guart, who vas a nadural peast, unt vas kept py olt Pragg pecause he vas glat to garry out orders to murder men, caught holt of me py my shoulter unt run me down to de pull-ben, leaving de Adjutant-Cheneral mit forty expressions on his angry vace.

"My goodness, my heart sunk vorse dan efer pefore vhen I hear de door shud pehint me. Dere vere 30 or 40 odders in de pull-ben. Dey vere all laying around — dull, stubid, sullen, silent, unt hobeless. Dey hartly baid any addention to me. I sat down on a log, unt my heart seemed to sink glear oud of me. For de virst dime in my life I gouldn't see de slightest ray of hobe. Drough de gracks in de pull-ben I gould see de fresh graves of de men who had alreaty peen shod, unt vwhile I looked I saw a squad of niggers come out unt pegin digging de grafes of dose who vere to be shod to-morrow. I gould see reppel soldiers unt officers bassing py, stob unt look a moment at de grafes, shrug deir shoulters, unt go on. Id froze my plood to dink dat to-morrow dey vould pe looking at my grafe dat vay. Afdter avhile a man come in unt gif each vone of us a biece of gornpread unt mead. De odders ade deirs greedily, put I gould not touch id. Night come on, unt still I sat dere. Suddenly de door obened, unt de Adjutant-Cheneral come in mit a man apout my size and dressed someding like me. As he bassed he gaught holt of my arm in a sort of a vay dat made me unterstant to ged ub unt follow pehint him. I dit so ad vonce mitoud saying a vord. I valked pehint him areunt de pull-ben until ve come back to de door, vhen de guart bresented arms, unt he valked oud, mit me sdill pehint him, leafing de odder man insite. Afdter ve hat gone a liddle vay he sdopped unt vispered to me:

"De Cheneral hat to go off in a hurry tovard Var Trace dis afdernoon. He dook de Provost-Sergeant unt bart of his sdaff mit him, put I hat to be left pehint to vinish up dis vork. I gan'd ged anypody else to do id pud you. I'm going to dake you ofer to a gabin, vhere you'll pe oud of sighd. I vand you to rush dat vork drough as

vast as de Lord'll led you. After you ged id done you gan go vhere you dam please, so long as you don'd led de Cheneral sed eyes on you. I've safed your life, unt I'm going to drust to your honor to blay vair mit me. Help me oud, do your vork righd, unt den nefer led me see you again.'

"Of gourse, I blayed vair. I asked no questions, you ped, apoud de boor teffil he hat pud in my blace. I vorked all dat night unt all de next day gedding his babers in de pest bossible shabe, unt in making gopies of dem vor Cheneral Rosecrans, vvhich I sduck pehint de chimney in de gabin. Along in de morning I heard de trums beading as de men vere marched out to vitness de execution. Id mate my heart thump a liddle, but I kept on sgratching away mit my pen for life unt death. Den de trums stopped beading vor avhile, unt den dey begun agin. Den I heard a volley dat mate me shiver all ofer. Den de trums bead as de men vere marched pack to deir gamps. If I hat hat dime I dink I should haf vainted. Towards efening I hat got efferyding in virst-glass shape. De Adjutant-Cheneral come in. He looked ofer de babers in a very sadisfied vay, voldered dem ub, checked off vrom a list a memorandum of de babers he hat gifen me to gopy unt gompile, unt saw dat I hat gifen dem all pack to him. Den he looked me sdraighd in de eye unt said:

"Now, Chew, dere's no use of my saying anyding to you. You heard dat volley dis morning, unt unterstood id. Nefer led me or de Cheneral lay eyes on you again. You haf done your bart all righd, unt I mine. Goot-by.'

"He dook his babers unt valked out of de gabin. As soon as he vas gone I snatched de gopies dat I hat hidden pehint de chimney, sduck dem here unt dere into my glose, unt sdarted for de outer lines.

"I made my vay to a house vhere I knew I'd vind some men who had sgouted mit me pefore. I knew dey might pe susbicious of me, pud I Gould ged dem to go along by bredending to haf orders vrom Headquarters for a sgout. I got to de house py morning, vound some of dem dere, geddered up some more, unt haf been riding around all day, looking at de Yankee lines, unt drying to vind some

vay to ged inside. I'm nearly deat for sleebe, put I must haf dese babers in Cheneral Rosecrans's hants pefore I glose my eyes."

"Your horse is all right, isn't he?" asked Shorty.

"Yes, I dink so," answered Rosenbaum.

"Well, we have a good horse here. I'll mount him and go with you to camp, leaving Si and the rest of the boys here. I kin git back to them by daylight."

So it was agreed upon.

Day was just breaking when Shorty came galloping back.

"Turn out, boys!" he shouted. "Pack up, and start back for camp as quick as you kin. The whole army's on the move."

"What's happened, Shorty?" inquired Si, as they all roused themselves and gathered around.

"Well," answered Shorty, rather swelling with the importance of that which he had to communicate, "all I know is that we got into camp a little after midnight, and went direct to Gen. Rosecrans's Headquarters. Of course, the old man was up; I don't believe that old hook-nosed duffer ever sleeps. He was awful glad to see Rosenbaum, and gave us both great big horns o' whisky, which Rosenbaum certainly needed, if I didn't, for he was dead tired, and almost flopped down after he handed his papers to the General. But the General wanted him to stay awake, and kept plying him with whisky whenever he would begin to sink, and, my goodness, the questions he did put at that poor Jew.

"I thought we knowed something o' the country out here around us, but, Jerusalem, all that we know wouldn't make a primer to Rosecrans's Fifth Reader. How were the bridges on this road? Where did that road lead to? How deep was the water in this crick? How many rebels were out there? Where was Bragg's cavalry? Where's his reserve artillery? And so on, until I thought he'd run a seine through every water-hole in that Jew's mind and dragged out the last minner in it. I never heard the sharpest lawyer put a man through such a cross-examination.

"Rosenbaum was equal to everything asked him, but it seemed to me that Gen. Rosecrans knowed a great deal more about what was inside the rebel lines than Rosenbaum did. All this time they was goin' over the papers that Rosenbaum brung, and Old Rosey seemed tickled to death to git 'em. He told Rosenbaum he'd done the greatest day's work o' his life and made his fortune.

"In the meantime the whole staff had waked up and gathered in the tents, and while the General was pumpin' Rosenbaum he was sending orders to this General and that General, and stirrin' things up from Dan to Beer-sheba. Lord, you ought t've seen that army wake up. I wouldn't 've missed it for a farm. Everything is on the move—right on the jump. We're goin' for old Bragg for every cent we're worth, and we want to git back to the regiment as quick as our legs'll carry us. Hustle around, now."

"But what 're we goin' to do with our prisoners?" asked Si.

"Blast the prisoners!" answered Shorty with profane emphasis. "Let 'em go to blue blazes, for all that we care. We're after bigger game than a handful o' measly pennyroyal sang-diggers. We hain't no time to fool with polecats when we're huntin' bear. Go off and leave 'em here."

"That's all right," said Si, to whom an idea occurred. "Hustle around, boys, but don't make no noise. We'll march off so quietly that they won't know that we're gone, and it'll be lots o' fun thinking what they'll do when they wake up and begin clapper-clawin' one another and wonderin' what their fate'll be."

(Continued in Part VIII)

38.55

3853

168

37.22

32.87

18.11



Duke University Libraries



D01691421O